

À la personne: Gerstein, M.
 une de l'Union Flakme & Cie, Düsseldorf, 1931.
 Avant la guerre chef de rayon de cette maison.
 1 année à Münster / Westphalie - puis à l'usine
 de la, président, Hagen Westphalie - puis à l'usine de la SS.

THE 'CONFESSIONS' OF KURT GERSTEIN



Henri ROQUES

Je ne veux que l'un seul de ces deux livres pour moi. Je
 le veux car il est dans tout le monde - avec les réponses
 aux questions de justice, ou plutôt d'histoire. Je ne veux pas
 par la difficulté d'enlever dans la langue d'aujourd'hui.
 1941 comme vous le savez, la langue d'aujourd'hui
 de l'Allemagne avec 40 millions de personnes, pour nous
 les Français de l'Allemagne - le 2 juin 1941, le 25
 service médical - l'Allemagne - l'Allemagne
 l'Allemagne générale de la SS.

**THE
'CONFESSIONS'
OF
KURT
GERSTEIN**

**Henri
Roques**

INSTITUTE FOR HISTORICAL REVIEW
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Foreword

BY RONALD V. PERCIVAL

The Thesis

The reader who enjoys history-told-as-a-story might at first find this a difficult book to read, for this is history-told-as-research.

Putting it in medical terms, it is a diagnosis rather than a case history, and what Henri Roques has diagnosed is not one but two maladies:

— the improbability of Gerstein's evidence when tested against the ordinary rules of common sense, and

— how Gerstein's "confessions" have been manipulated by historians, journalists, dramatists, and other writers for the last forty years.



In compiling a thesis of this type in France, various conditions have to be met, and these explain the form in which the thesis is laid out.

Two examples might anticipate the puzzlement of a reader not familiar with this process:

— The candidate must demonstrate the *relevance* of his study. For instance, he will not succeed if all he can say is: "I have discovered that the evidence of an obviously neurotic junior SS officer in charge of a small disinfection operation, who ran to the Allies when he saw Germany being defeated, was accused of war crimes, and then committed suicide, is unreliable." The reply of the director of studies would be the French equivalent of "So what?"

The candidate has to show that what he has discovered is relevant: namely, that the SS officer was believed; that his allegations were used at trials; have been quoted countless times in newspapers, magazines, books and even the theatre; that his evidence has been a main support of the Holocaust concept; and, finally, that the candidate's study of the texts shows that the evidence is, for any practical purposes, worthless.

— Following from this, the thesis has to include a continuing review of the use and abuse of Gerstein's "confessions" by contemporary historians.

The purposes of this review is not to denigrate other historians but to demonstrate that all the appropriate authorities have been studied; to explain what has been found wrong in their books, and therefore how modern history has been warped and misinterpreted.



Unfortunately, for the English-speaking reader, the historians quoted in the thesis are mostly French or German, whose books have not always been translated into English. The reason for the choice is obvious: the three professors on Henri Roques' jury were more familiar with French and German writers and English writers. But if this practical reason had not existed and Henri Rocques had had to review every English-language book containing a distorted version of a Gerstein "confession," his task could have been overwhelming, and a grossly disproportionate share of the thesis taken up merely with reference to other writers.



To balance the record though, let us quote one example of a British writer whose manipulation of Gerstein's "confession" of 26 April 1945 (referred to in the thesis as T II) is typical of so many other historians writing in English.

On pages 90-92 of his book *Final Journey*,¹ Martin Gilbert tells the reader:

"...Dr. Kurt Gerstein, whom Eichmann employed as a poison gas expert..."

In fact:

— Gerstein never was a doctor of any sort. In the text quoted by Gilbert, Gerstein is not said to have been a doctor.

— The text used by Gilbert does not mention any person named Eichmann.

— Assuming that Gilbert means *Adolf* Eichmann, then neither in this text nor in any other does Gerstein claim to have met or to have worked for Adolf Eichmann; Gerstein knew so little about Adolf Eichmann that he could not even spell his name properly.

— Gerstein was never employed as a poison gas expert, by anyone. He says he witnessed one gassing by Diesel fumes at Belzec; he says he was instructed to change over the gassing method to cyanide, which he did not do; but throughout every version of his "confessions" and his interrogations by the French military, he states again and again and again that he personally was never involved in the use of poison gas.

Martin Gilbert continues:

"...the Belzec camp had a special compound for the SS, above the entrance of which was the sign: 'Entrance to the Jewish State.' "

— Again we meet that famous and so abused word "special," the

ominous implications of which are discussed by Henri Roques on page 132 of his thesis.

All the military units in the camp have special quarters. How could the fire-fighting unit, for example, function properly if the personnel and equipment were scattered higgledy-piggledy around the cook-house, the hospital, the transport yard, the operations office, and so on?

There is nothing "special" or sinister in the SS having their own quarters; on the contrary, it is one of the basics of everyday camp management.

But according to the Gerstein text which Gilbert was using, the sign outside the SS premises read: "Place of service Belzec of the SS Army." Whence, then, Gilbert's "Entrance to the Jewish State" outside the SS quarters?

There is yet more arrangement of the scenery to come. Martin Gilbert goes on:

"...from their compound...the SS men could actually see the entrance to the gas-chamber, the doors to which had been draped with synagogue curtains bearing the Hebrew inscription: 'This is the gate of the Lord into which the righteous shall enter.'"

— Where did these curtains come from? This colorful bit of stage property does not exist in any Gerstein text.

In his own description, Gerstein states that the entrances to his alleged six gas-chambers (not one gas-chamber) were on either side of a corridor inside a building, where they could hardly be visible from any separate SS compound. The wooden exit doors, through which the bodies were dragged and thrown into enormous graves, were obviously in the outside walls of the building and, self-evidently, the outside of a building has to be the visible side.

If we take Gilbert's reconstruction of the building seriously, are we to believe that someone who could not read Hebrew had put welcoming curtains over an exit door? And over only one of the six exit doors (leaving the other five bare) where the victims would be most unlikely to see it, being dead?



But first prize for fiction-written-as-history must surely go to Dr. Stefan Szende who, being unaware in 1944 that gas was the fashionable thing at Belzec, published a book² describing a shed about the size of an aircraft hangar, with a steel floor; several thousands of Jews at a time were crowded in; the floor dropped like a lift into a sort of reservoir or swimming pool; a terrific electric current was passed through the water and the victims were electrocuted (not drowned); then the lift rose again; the metal floor turned red hot and incinerated everyone; and then the floor tilted and the ashes slid off

into receptacles provided for the purpose.

Neat, hygienic, and unadulterated poppycock from start to finish. No trace of this wonderful machine has ever been found because it never existed. But it is interesting to note how, before the war was even finished, propagandists were laying the ground for sensational revelations. When Gerstein walked on the scene, the audience was already applauding.



Gilbert at least did stay within hailing distance of a Gerstein “confession” even though he has taken unpardonable liberties with the truth.

But trying to understand his inventions and distortions, one is driven to the conclusion that if he had wished to preserve some tatters of credibility, he might have been wiser to follow the more clear-cut example of another Holocaust expert, Raul Hilberg, who, testifying before a Toronto court, is quoted as saying:

Some of the SS officer’s (Gerstein’s) claims were outrageous; while others, such as the number of people who could fit into a gas-chamber, warranted scepticism. (Nevertheless) it was intellectually sound to use the portions which withstood scrutiny or seemed plausible, while making no mention of the outlandish statements.³

Law-abiding citizens everywhere should feel grateful that Professor Hilberg is not a judge in any of our criminal courts. Such an eclectic approach to evidence would cause chaos in the real world where testimony has to be assessed as a composite whole and not picked over, like a plate of *hors d’oeuvres*, for only those bits which seem palatable.

L’Affaire Roques

Henri Roques has a unique place in history.

In the seven hundred years of French universities, he is the only person on record who was awarded a doctorate by the normal and legal processes and then had it cancelled, without reason.

He was awarded the doctorate at Nantes on 15 June 1985 with the additional distinction “Very Good.” He gave copies of the thesis to historian friends and two copies were deposited, as routine, in the university library.

Then, in the spring of 1986, there rose a storm of vituperation against him in the press, on radio and TV. In effect, he was accused of exonerating or excusing racist massacres; an accusation so irrelevant to the thesis and so nonsensical that it does not merit discussion: the thesis concerns itself only with Gerstein and primarily with Belzec.

But a campaign of denigration evolved. It became a crusade. And just as many of the original crusaders pleaded "Holy Religion" as a pretext to acquire landed property, so a great many of Roques' adversaries claimed a superior morality but were people who, in fact, did not want *any* of the files on the last war opened up.

It was Voltaire (French himself, aptly enough) who defined history as "fables that have been agreed upon." Henri Roques became the Elizabethan who doubted his Queen's virginity, or the boy who had pointed out that the Emperor wore no clothes. He had violated the mysteries held sacred, and nothing was too bad for him.

This outburst of pseudo-morality, to be sure, was not edifying but it was predictable, and Henri Roques was not alone. Honest historians who had read the thesis spoke out, commending his integrity and scholarship. Some were ex-deportees themselves.

But French governments, as in the Dreyfus case, have an uncanny knack of fomenting a scandal and then having to drink it down to the last bitter drop. The government wanted popularity; and to denigrate Henri Roques was, as they thought, a popular cause.

There was a small difficulty. They could not discredit the thesis itself: it is, as anyone can see, unimpeachable. The only way open to them was to allege that the doctorate had not been properly awarded.

Good Men and True

His thesis competed, Henri Roques then had the task of forming a jury of three professors. To avoid any accusation of bias, he invited Pierre Vidal-Naquet, a leading French exterminationist whose parents, along with so many others, disappeared at Auschwitz in 1944; and who is the avowed detractor of the brilliant French historian, Robert Faurisson. Vidal-Naquet declined the invitation.

Later, in collaboration with other propagandists such as Saul Friedländer, whose falsifications of the Gerstein story are mentioned in the thesis, Vidal-Naquet demonstrated his customary ignorance of professional good manners by trying, in public, to discredit those of his fellow professors who did serve on the Roques jury. he also made false statements about the thesis itself.

Henri Roques' offer, generous and honest though it was, could nevertheless have turned out to be a mistake if Vidal-Naquet had by chance accepted it:

— Vidal-Naquet is not a researcher, but a polemicist; his speciality is not facts but the selection and arrangement of facts to conform with his propagandist view. At his best, he is a clever journalist for the bigoted left-wing press.

— His published statements and writings show that he is quite

incapable of studying a phenomenon such as Nazism with detached scientific objectivity, and of overloading his interpretations with views hinging entirely on race to the exclusion of all else. To Vidal-Naquet, an historian who has not swallowed the Holocaust myth whole or, more particularly, his false version of it, is *ipso facto* an anti-Semite: a childish process of reasoning, to be sure, but typical of his school. Thus, his seal of approval on the Roques thesis would have seriously damaged its stature: thinking historians would immediately have regarded the thesis as suspect.

Still, Henri Roques did offer him his chance. Instead of accepting that chance, as a man with some professional integrity would have done, he evaded it; contenting himself later with defaming his colleagues in public and making false statements about the thesis itself, which he evidently had not read. It is not without reason that many of us feel Vidal-Naquet would be a man of odious principles, if he had any.



The three good men and true who did step forward were:

- Jean-Paul Allard, a Germanist and specialist in modern history;
- Jean-Claude Riviere, Henri Roques' own director of studies, a specialist in textual analysis, and
- Fr. Pierre Zind, also a specialist in modern history and well known for his views on Alsatian nationalism.

Considering the scurrilous campaign conducted against them when the Roques Affair exploded, it is difficult to praise their honesty and courage too highly.

A date was fixed, the usual notices circulated, and all the legal formalities observed. The practice in France, as elsewhere, is that the final hearing of a thesis, which we sometimes call a "dissertation," is held in public: anyone with a legitimate interest can attend. Essentially, the hearing is an oral examination: one of the main purposes is for the jurors to assure themselves that the candidate really has researched and studied his subject and not merely cobbled a thesis together from other peoples' books.

Henri Roques had an unusually large audience of about forty persons.

Later, Vidal-Naquet and others alleged that the hearing had been held with undue haste and secrecy: this is a downright falsehood. Vidal-Naquet himself had been invited to participate as a juror but had refused. However, we also know now that he had been in contact with colleagues at the University of Nantes to keep himself informed of developments; furthermore, he could have shown up as one of the audience at the hearing if he had wanted to. Why did he not? Is it because it was easier to stay away, i.e., evade hearing the facts of the

thesis before witnesses, so that he could glibly distort those facts afterwards?

Discussing the development of French universities up to modern times, Alfred Cobben wrote:

An imposing bureaucratic apparatus centered in Paris was charged with regulating the educational life of France down to the smallest detail. If, today, the rector of a university cannot appoint his secretary, dismiss a cleaner, or modify an academic course without reference to Paris, it is in obedience to the dead hand of Napoleon.⁴

In assessing this statement, we should remember that when the university apparatus was installed, neither Napoleon — nor any successive government — wanted independent centers of learning. What Napoleon wanted, and what we still have, is a tool of government. Until quite recent times, exactly the same comment could have been made of Henry VIII's reformation of the church and universities in England.

A skeptic might, with reason, wonder how a constitution developed by Napoleon could still be functioning according to the original plan more than one and a half centuries later; but it does. Other evidence could be offered, but the best is already in hand: the case of Henri Roques himself. The action against him was initiated, not by any university or academic authority, but by a political minister and for political reasons.

Dr. Goebbels himself would have relished such a privilege.



In the Anglo-Saxon countries, the independence of the universities may not be quite so perfected as some of us like to imagine. Nevertheless, the ideal of independence is in place, is generally accepted and can be appealed to. Perhaps it might be more accurate to say that in general a concordat exists between universities and governments; the universities do not meddle in government affairs and the government does not intervene in university matters.

This is not true in France. Certainly, men of integrity and learning do teach at French universities and, moreover, manage to retain some independence of judgement. But since the universities are almost entirely dependent on the government for finance, academics tend to regard themselves and behave much as any other civil servant. As in the army, in the police or in the diplomatic service, conformity with government policies earns approval and promotion.



On xii, we show a copy of Paul Malvy's letter of 3 July 1986 and a translation.

Of the two reasons quoted by Malvy, the first is ridiculous. Henri Roques asked the authorities to transfer his file from Paris IV to

Nantes because his new director of studies was a professor at Nantes. If the file had arrived too late, or there had been some other clerical error, why did not Malvy's office say so at the time? It cannot have been Henri Roques' error — or any grounds whatsoever for cancelling a doctorate — if there had been some sort of administrative mix-up on the part of Malvy's own staff.

The second reason is more interesting.

The jury of the three professors had invited the participation of a lecturer at the University as an expert on the period. Since he was not a professor (head of department), he had no authority to sign any document relating to the thesis and he was not even permitted to sit in when the jury was deliberating. His function was merely that of an expert witness. As a matter of fact, he was not even present at the public hearing of the thesis on 15 June 1985.

But Malvy's "investigators" found his "signature" on the report of the hearing! This "signature" did not resemble the lecturer's proper signature at all: it was self-evidently false. It was so patently false, in fact, that to call it a "forgery" could be a form of flattery.

Who then had added this name. It was some mischief-maker, no doubt: and no friend of Henri Roques. How did it happen that his false name was found all of one year after the doctorate had been approved? After the file had already circulated among dozens of people? Why was it suddenly noticed only when Malvy had started his "investigation"?

We shall probably never know. This farcical and contemptible attempt to disqualify the thesis could not work; or so we thought. The genuine signatures of the jury remained valid and they were all that counted.

Not so: the government had found its pretext, a pretext obviously fabricated by those who, like the government, wanted the thesis suppressed. But the pretext, no matter how flimsy, was used, and the doctorate was annulled.



In seeking to discredit Roques, the minister had merely succeeded in discrediting himself, the universities he was supposed to protect and the value of the diplomas awarded by those universities. Perhaps the enemies of academic freedom enjoyed a momentary satisfaction; but meantime the thesis, by now famous, had been published in full. It is interesting that throughout the whirlwind of verbiage that the publication provoked, not one word of criticism was uttered by anyone on the content of the thesis itself. In other words, the only aspect of the thesis which concerned its adversaries had not been its truthfulness and accuracy but its propaganda impact: a fact which, of itself, it illuminating.

Six months later, there was an amusing and not irrelevant sequel. Devaquet, the minister who had implemented the government's policies against Roques, himself a product of the best in the university system, was forced to resign. He had provoked the largest student demonstrations France has ever seen.

The immediate reason was the "Devaquet Law," intended to change students' conditions. Devaquet inevitably blamed the students, saying they had not read his law properly. Perhaps; perhaps not; though it seems odd that students would revolt for reasons unknown to themselves. Had Devaquet, though, ever read Henri Roques' thesis properly? If so, what was his explanation for his conduct in that case?

Unless they happen to be reading modern history, today's students rarely care very much about the so-called Holocaust or the travails of France during the last world war. Certainly, although the shameless treatment of Henri Roques was public knowledge, the students did not take to the streets because of Henri Roques; nor had Henri Roques incited them.

But students do care, often very intensely, about the quality of the education they are supposed to be getting, the integrity of the functionaries who are supposed to administer the universities, and the worthwhileness of the degree for which they are striving.

Devaquet had shown himself a poor guardian of those interests if, indeed, he had given them any thought at all. His appeals and explanations were ignored: he was not believed. His resignation was accepted and his law was withdrawn.

Academic Historians

To understand why the Roques thesis caused such an uproar, it is useful to study the declaration of the Historians shown on 11.

This was intended by its signatories to be an important document.

It is certainly and interesting one for many reasons, among them:

It was composed and signed by civil servants holding academic positions, and therefore reflects very accurately the views of the French establishment, and the signatories knew that the evidence they were quoting was incomplete/unproven/suspect, but withheld that fact.

Since this declaration was published, much of the evidence other than Gerstein's had been discredited too. For example, we have seen in France a film released by the Russians forty-one years after the event, purporting to show Auschwitz. Much of the film was patently faked; even so, no evidence of gas-chambers, nor of so many other things affirmed categorically in the Declaration was to be seen.

However, one can also justifiably question why government employees, designated by themselves as historians, should feel obliged to publish declarations in newspapers? Is the ordinary press a suitable vehicle for an historical study? Or a propaganda effort? Surely the press tends to be part of the problem of historical truth, not its arbiter?

But the overriding interest of this declaration has to be its manifestation of the very low caliber of intellect given to the study of modern history in French universities these days. Let us not be either too contemptuous or despondent: France, in quality and clarity of thought, has led the world before and can do so again. But if this declaration has to be accepted as symptomatic of the mental and moral stature of academic historians, then it must be admitted that the outlook, as far as the history departments of French universities is concerned, is at the present time little less than dismal.



What does it actually say?

It starts off by saying that if we do not swallow — hook, line, and sinker — all that is about to follow, we must surely be exceptionally nasty persons lacking a proper humanitarian respect for Jews, Gypsies, and Slavs. Thus, at the outset, they put the study of history precisely where it should not be, at the center of a racist controversy. These historians' lack of good manners is repugnant enough.

Then we have a good deal of cant as they tell us with sonorous dignity (omitting to mention that they actually earn their livings at the history business) what an altruistic and public-minded duty they are performing by putting us to rights.

Then more cant about "schools of thought," as though there ever was any true diversity of views in a civil service. And then the "servitors of the humble truth," tossing in a quote from Herodotus to encourage our faith in their authenticity and erudition, proceed to a lie, by quoting evidence which they knew was false, or, at the very least, extremely dubious.

Once more, we have to read that Germans writing official government documents did not write what they meant; that to disguise the true facts they used an office jargon called *Amtsprache*, the hidden meaning of which was invariably sinister; and thus only cognoscenti, such as self-designated historians who write to *Le Monde*, can now understand what the Germans really meant.

Surely this ploy, or sly evasion of reality, has by now been over-used? Anyone who knows Germans knows that Germans, on no matter what official business, endeavor to write exactly what they mean, neither more nor less. If these historians are to be believed, it is hard to know how Hitler could have ordered a three-minute egg for

breakfast without precipitating a massacre of Jews, Gypsies and Slavs somewhere or other.

But why did not the historians disclose that their principal witness, Gerstein, whose evidence they already knew to be dubious, had been accused of war crimes? And that after facing the first interrogation by a competent professional, the Frenchman Mathieu Mattéi, Gerstein had apparently hanged himself?

The arrogance, bad manners and chicanery of this declaration, the falsehoods and evasions, became tedious. The final insult to the intelligence is a peroration...“that everyone is free to believe what he wishes...provided he believes what we tell him.”

And yet, this declaration was signed by people with pretensions to intelligence! Their livelihoods (one could have hoped) depended on their teaching history competently.

It is no wonder that they and their employers (the government) identified Henri Roques as an enemy and that the most vicious attacks on him came from this group and its supporters.

But all for naught. The declaration has been quoted in countless books; it has stayed to haunt them and has done incalculable damage to their reputations. Just like Gerstein himself, they let their enthusiasm for the written word and their desire for fame run away with them, and did not stop to check whether their facts held together.



A little comedy is always refreshing.

On page 14 we show copy of letter dated 18 April 1986 from the bursar's office of Nantes University, and a translation.

All that this brief letter means is that the official diploma of Henri Roques' doctorate (the sort of certificate which some of us like to frame and hang on the wall) was ready for collection. The University of Nantes certainly took its time, as the doctorate had been awarded ten months previously.

Henri Roques duly sent 16 francs and 60 centimes (about \$3.00) for the diploma to be mailed.

But, although the doctorate was not annulled until 3 July 1986, the press had, in April, already lit the fuse to the powder keg of the Roques affair.

Someone in the bursar's office was either very cautious, or clairvoyant. Henri Roques did not receive his diploma (surely this calls for an investigation?); nor, as a matter of fact, did he get back his 16 francs and 60 centimes (Malvy must have a great deal of clout.)

However, this document must still be on file somewhere. It is the only one of its kind ever made and then cancelled since French universities were founded seven centuries ago. It is unique. Its historical value is hardly calculable.

To be sure, one day it will turn up at a Sotheby's auction.

Presidence De L'Université de Nantes

Le President.

Nantes, le 3 juillet 1986

L'Administrateur de l'Université de Nantes,

Vu le rapport de l'enquête administrative, menée à la demande de Monsieur le Ministre Alain DEVAQUET, Ministre Délégué auprès de Monsiuer le Ministre de l'Education Nationale, chargé de la Recherche et de l'Enseignement Supérieur, par Monsiuer le Recteur Jean-Claude DISCHAMPS, Chancelier de l'Université de Nantes, sur la soutenance de thèse pour l'obtention de Diplôme d'Etudes et de Recherche (Doctorat d'Université) intervenue le 15 juin 1985 à Lyon, Rhône, Monsieur Marcel BONVALET étant Recteur, Chancelier de l'Université de Nantes, et Monsieur Jacques VILAINE, ancien Président de l'Université de Nantes, étant Administrateur Provisioire de cette Université,

Vu, notamment, les conclusions de ce rapport, exposées publiquement au cours de la conférence de presse, organisée le 2 juillet 1986 au Ministère de la Recherche et de l'Enseignement Supérieur, à l'initiative de Monsieur Alain DEVAQUET,

Attendu qu'il ressort de ces conclusions que les conditions de transfert du dossier de Monsiuer ROQUES depuis l'Université de Paris IV, d'inscription à l'Université de Nantes, ainsi que de la soutenance de thèse ont été entachées d'irrégularité,

DECIDE

Article 1 - La soutenance de thèse de Monsieur Henri ROQUES, qui a eu lieu à Nantes le 15 juin 1985, est annulée.

Article 2 - Cette décision sera notifiée à Monsieur ROQUES par voie d'huissier. Elle rend nulle et non avenue l'attestation qui lui a été délivrée le 28 juin 1985.

Article 3 - Cette décision sera portée à la connaissance de Monsiuer le Recteur de l'Academie de Nantes, Chancelier des Universités, de Messieurs les Coordonnateurs des Ensembles, de Monsieur le Directeur de l'Institute de Lettres Modernes, des membres du Jury et des membres des Conseils de l'Université.

P. Malvy

Translation

Presidency of the University of Nantes

Nantes, 8 July 1986

The President

(To the) Provisional Administrator of the University of Nantes,

In view of the report of the administrative enquiry conducted at the request of Monsieur the Minister ALAIN DEVAQUET, Deputy Minister to Monsieur the Minister for National Education, responsible for Research and Advanced Studies, by Monsieur the Rector Jean-Claude DISCHAMPS, Chancellor of the University of Nantes, on the defense of a thesis for the award of the Diploma of Studies and Research (Doctorate of the University) held 15 June 1985 at 9 hours before the Faculty of Studies and Research, Letters and Humanities, of the University of Nantes, by Monsieur Henri ROQUES, born 10 November 1920 at Lyon, Rhône, Monsieur Marcel BONVALET being the Rector, Chancellor of the University of Nantes, and Monsieur Jacques VILAINE, former President of the University of Nantes, being the Provisional Administrator of this University,

In view, notably, of the conclusions of this report, explained publicly in the course of a press conference,⁵ organised 2 July 1986 at the Ministry of Research and Advanced Studies, on the initiative of Monsieur Alain DEVAQUET.

Whereas it arises from these conclusions that the circumstances of the transfer of the file⁶ of Monsieur ROQUES from the University of Paris IV, the registration at the University of Nantes, as well as the upholding of the thesis have been marked by irregularity,

It is decided that

Article 1 — The upholding of the thesis of Monsieur Henri ROQUES, which took place at Nantes on the 15 June 1985 is annulled.

Article 2 — This decision will be notified to Monsieur Henri ROQUES by means of a court messenger. It renders null and void the certificate which was delivered to him 28 June, 1985.

Article 3 — This decision will be brought to the notice of Monsieur the Rector of the Academy of Nantes, the Chancellor for the Universities, to Messieurs the Coordinators of Assemblies, to Monsieur the Director of the Institute of Contemporary Letters, to the members of the Jury and to the members of the Committee of the University.

(signed) P. Malvy

Université de Nantes

Faculté des Lettres Et Sciences Humaines

(Ensemble Administratif «L»)

B.P. 1025 · 44036 Nantes Cedex · Tél. (40) 74.74.01

SCOL/YL/JC

Nantes, le 18 avril 1986

Le Chef du Bureau Sclarité "L"

à Monsieur Roques Henri

Objet: Diplôme du Recherche d'Université

Monsieur,

J'ai l'honneur de vous faire connaître que le diplôme que vous aviez demandé est à votre disposition au bureau de la scolarité.

Les bureaux de la scolarité sont ouverts tous les jours de 8 H 45 à 11 H 30.

Si vous ne pouvez pas vous déplacer, vous voudrez bien nous faire parvenir 16,60 F en timbres pour l'envoi par correspondance.

Je vous prie d'agréer, Monsiuer, l'expression de mes sentiments distingués.

Le Chef du Bureau Scolarité "L"

Y. Lannurien

Translation

University of Nantes

Faculty of Letters and the Humanities

Nantes, 18 April 1986

(Administrative Offices "L")

P.O.B. 1025

4406 Nantes Cedex

Phone: (4) 74.74.01

SCOL/YL/JC

Head of the Bursar's Office "L" to

Monsieur Roques Henri

Subject: Diploma of the University for Research

Sir,

I have the honor to inform you that the diploma you have requested is at your disposal at the Bursar's office.

The Bursar's offices are open every day from 8.45 hours until 11.30.

If you are unable to collect personally, kindly remit Francs 16.60 stamps for dispatch by mail.

I request you to accept, Monsieur, the expression of my respectful regards,

Head of the Bursar's Office "L"

(stamp and signature) Y. Lannurien

Footnotes

1. Published by George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, and Mayflower Books, Inc., New York, 1979.
2. *The Promise Hitler Kept*, published by Victor Gollancz, London.
3. *The Globe and Mail*, Toronto, 17 January, 1985.
4. Alfred Cobban, *A History of Modern France, Volume II, 1799-1871*, published by Penguin Books Ltd., England, 1977. He was professor of French History at London University, and also visiting professor at Chicago, Harvard, John Hopkins and other universities in the United States.
5. An incident which showed Devaquet's style of managing universities and his respect for their integrity.

With the intention, doubtless, of capturing some favorable media publicity, Devaquet announced his decision at a special press conference. As the dates show, Henri Roques was informed later.

All the authorities at the University of Nantes denied categorically that there had been any irregularity in processing the Roques file, thesis papers, etc. Would this be the reason why Devaquet went over their heads and faced them with a *fait accompli*?

If an enquiry was necessary at all, surely that was a domestic matter for the university; but under the Devaquet regime the universities were to lose not merely any tatters of independence but their self-respect as well.

Like the Historians, Devaquet believed in trial by the media, and like them, he walked into a fool's trap: the Historians lost their credibility, and he became the most unpopular minister for the universities that France has had in many a year.

6. The student's file of biographical details, academic history, courses being studied, at which university registered, and so forth.

Introduction

Why have we chosen as the subject for a thesis a study of the “confessions” of the German, Kurt Gerstein? Principally, for the following reasons:

— These confessions have been used since 1945 by numerous French and foreign authors both in books and in magazine and newspaper articles.

— Attentive readers of these books and articles have been misled by the important differences one notes in the reproduction of the texts, as well as the dates attributed to the “confessions.” The confessions actually exist in several versions, which justifies a comparative study.

— We are faced with an enigma that is due in particular to Gerstein’s strange personality; and a critical examination of his “confessions” might possibly help us to resolve that enigma. However, the Gerstein enigma will not be the focal point of our work, because we are not here concerned with an historical study. We shall refer to this aspect only in making use of the books written about him by three authors (see pages 6 and 12), and the letters which have been addressed to us by his widow.

— The texts left us by the former SS officer are key documents in the files on the poison gas chambers: gas chambers whose existence in the Nazi concentration camps is strongly contested by Revisionist historians;¹

— Not only all the Revisionist authors, but certain non-Revisionists as well, wish that a university thesis might establish the exact texts. In the course of a trial on 29 May 1981 in which Léon Poliakov was pitted against Robert Faurisson, both Léon Poliakov and Pierre Vidal-Naquet stated that it was but a trivial fault if additions, suppressions, and errors could be pointed out in Poliakov’s publications concerning the Gerstein story, since it was not a matter of a university thesis.²

This incertitude regarding the exact texts of the “confessions,” their authenticity and their veracity, seems to us to justify defending the present thesis as coming within the scope of a French language Department of Education and Research.

First, it is essential to resolve a problem of editing the texts, even though the style of these narratives is mediocre, and taking into consideration that Gerstein was not writing in his native language.

Although their author was German, four of the six versions of the “confessions” known to us are written in French.

Gerstein, who had studied French in high school, surrendered to the troops of the 1st French Army, who were occupying Württemberg at the end of April 1945, and composed for them his “confessions” in French. His French is often clumsy and incorrect, but sufficiently comprehensible to eliminate any risk of misunderstanding.

Our decision to call the texts left by Gerstein “confessions” could be questioned. They were generally called “reports” by the writers who have copied or discussed them. This term “report” does not seem suitable to us; the texts of the former SS officer do not have the discipline nor the matter-of-fact style one expects in a report.

In order to avoid too-frequent repetition of the word “confessions,” the words “account” and “document” have sometimes been employed in the course of this thesis, but these terms are too neutral to describe the different versions.

In consideration of the tone, the form, and the content of these texts, we believe, with Olga Wormser-Migot (*Le Système concentrationnaire nazi*, page 11 and 426), that the word “confession” is the most appropriate.

At all times, we have placed the word “confession” in quotation marks, since the choice is ours and not Gerstein’s.

A Subject of Present-Day Concern?

One can consider that the subject is of current interest. On 21 February 1979, the newspaper *Le Monde*³ published a “Declaration of Historians on the Hitler Policy of Extermination” (see copy and translation pages 11 *et seq.* and also pages 166 *et seq.*). The composition of this declaration is attributable to Léon Poliakov and Pierre Vidal-Naquet, who obtained the signatures of thirty-two colleagues, including academics such as Emmanuel Leroy-Ladurie, Pierre Chaunu, J.P. Vernant, Jacques Le Goff, François Furet, *et. al.*

In this declaration we read: “...From amongst so very much evidence, which obviously can not come from those who have been killed, is it necessary to recall that of the SS Gerstein, who tried in vain, as early as 1942, to alert the civil and religious authorities on what was happening in these camps? Written by himself, 26 April 1945, for the French authorities, in hesitant French, his account, indisputable in its essentials, of what he saw at Belzec, is all the more moving ...”

Fifty-five lines follow, set out in two columns on page 23 of the newspaper; they are extracts from Gerstein’s typewritten account in French, carrying the reference number PS-1553, under which it was

called for, but not retained, by the Grand Tribunal of Nuremberg, on 30 January 1946. The partial reproduction of this text (which we shall designate T II in this thesis) conforms with the original.

The Most Convincing Evidence For The Existence of the Gas Chambers?

The two historians who have chosen Gerstein's evidence "from amongst so very much" maintain it to be probably the most convincing evidence for the existence of the gas chambers. The evidence can only be considered to be plentiful if one takes into account the often vague and contradictory evidence of the former deportees and the combatants who arrived at the camps just after their evacuation. There is no need here to wonder about the value that should be placed on the evidence.

Only the written evidence interests us; since that is scanty the authors of the declaration of the historians were very limited in their choice.

A Unique Case

During the trial of 29 May 1981, a lawyer asked the following question of Pierre Joffroy, who was testifying in favor of Léon Poliakov: "Can the witness tell the Court whether he has knowledge of any other evidence relating to the existence and to the functioning of the gas chambers coming from a high-ranking SS officer, or anyway of the rank of *Monsieur* Gerstein, which is available? Putting it another way, are there any other accessible sources originating from the SS of which there has been a trace during the war and not after the Liberation?"

Reply of Pierre Joffroy: "To my knowledge, no. For this reason I think that the evidence of Gerstein is important; it is for this reason that, in writing my book, I felt myself almost entrusted with a kind of mission, that of saying that this man was honest, was sincere. I think that if one tries to demolish this evidence, it is because it comes from within the SS and that there is no other so far as I know."

A bit previously, in the course of the same hearing, Pierre Joffroy had spontaneously stated in reference to Gerstein: "This was—I hesitate to say the word because it seems to me very inadequate—this was a hero, I should have said a saint." (CR.stenogr.1981.) This explains the title given by Joffroy to his book on Gerstein: *L'Espion de Dieu/La Passion de Kurt Gerstein* (God's Spy/The Passion of Kurt Gerstein).

In the same attitude of mind, Léon Poliakov had written in 1964

(*Le Monde Juif*/The Jewish World, March-April page 4): “The German Gerstein was a Righteous Man among the Gentiles.”

In light of such a presentation of his character and his writings, the author of the present thesis will not say, as does Pierre Joffroy, that he feels himself entrusted with some kind of mission, but more simply that it has seemed to him urgent to establish what really are the “confessions” of a former SS officer, to make a comparative study of the different versions, and to evaluate as exactly as possible the degree of credibility which can be accorded them.

Six Known Versions and Some Drafts

More fortunate than Pierre Joffroy who knows only three versions, than Saul Friedländer who counts four, than Léon Poliakov and Pierre Vidal-Naquet who quote five, we have the privilege of knowing six, to which can be added some separate pages which have sometimes served as drafts.

It is not certain that we have at our disposition all the documents still in existence; on the contrary, it is certain that a number of documents, either in French or in German, have disappeared. Details on this last point will be furnished in the course of this thesis.

Thus, we possess six complete texts, each of which constitutes one version of the “confessions”; they carry dates between 26 April and 6 May 1945 inclusive. The originals or their copies (certain originals have disappeared) are preserved in various archives of which we shall give the names and addresses when studying each of them.

Herewith the chronological list of the six texts, with the designations we have given them:

- T I: Handwritten text of 26 April 1945 in French
- T II: Typewritten text of 26 April 1945 in French (PS-1553)
- T III: Typewritten text of 4 May 1945 in German
- T IV: Handwritten text of 6 May 1945 in French
- T V: Typewritten text of 6 May 1945 in French entitled: “Report of Dr. Gerstein of Tübingen.” There are three variants:
 - The version of the O.R.C.G.,⁴ which is the first of the three (T Va)
 - A version originating from the above but with changes and errors in transcription; it is this text which is preserved in the National Archives in Washington with the declassification reference 01.0813 (T Vb)
 - An English translation, which moreover has at the top: “Translation,” obviously made from the second variant (T Vb), carrying the same reference 01.0813 of the National Archives in Washington (T

Vc)

— T VI: Typewritten text of 6 May 1945 in German (PS-2170)

Over and above these six texts, we shall present:

— Additions and drafts (to which we shall not assign a reference);

— The last letter written by Gerstein to his wife, dated 26 May 1945;

— Two interrogations of Gerstein by the French military justice department in June and July 1945;

— An article printed in the newspaper *France-Soir* of 4 July 1945;

— The request for a lawyer written by Gerstein in capital letters and dated 15 July 1945;

— Some fragments of documents found after Gerstein's death, in his cell in the prison of Cherche-Midi.

No Text Before 1945

Hypotheses concerning the existence of "Gerstein reports" (*sic*) as early as 1942 have been advanced by certain writers. It seems indispensable to study this question and to state here and now our conviction on this point.

In the Declaration of the Historians published in 1979 in the newspaper *Le Monde*, the efforts of SS Officer Gerstein "who tried in vain, as early as 1942, to alert the civil and religious authorities on what was happening in these camps" will be recalled.

Gerstein did actually speak to some witnesses, as confirmed by them. The Swedish diplomat, Baron von Otter, and two Dutchmen who were working in Berlin in 1943 have been affirmative on this point. With less clarity, some Protestant pastors, notably Otto Dibelius and Kurt Rehling, have acknowledged discussing with Gerstein his experiences in the Polish camps.

The texts of the "confessions" nowhere state that Gerstein made a written report to anybody whomsoever. One of the two Dutchmen mentioned above even declared as a witness during the trial of 29 May 1981 (CR. stenogr. 1981): "Gerstein told us that he could not write on this subject" (that is, the subject of the gassings at Belzec and Treblinka).

Nevertheless, one can read from the pen of Saul Friedländer: "In August 1942 Gerstein, who had just witnessed extermination gasings, tries to meet with the papal nuncio Orsenigo; he is sent away. It is then that he communicates a report to the legal advisor of Msgr. Preysing, Archbishop of Berlin, and requests that it be forwarded to the Holy See. There is no reason to believe that the document was not sent to Rome. The Gerstein report of 1942 was probably almost identical to the one he composed on 4 May 1945 since he describes

the same event... Considering the fact that to this day the Holy See has not denied having received the Gerstein report during the war, one has the right to assume that a text basically identical to that which we are about to quote was sent to the Sovereign Pontiff by Msgr. Preysing at the end of 1942.” (*Pie XII et le III^eme Reich*, 1964, page 123)

The deduction of the historian Friedländer seems questionable. That an assumed recipient has not denied receiving a supposed document is not sufficient grounds for thinking that the document did in all likelihood exist.

With his suppositions, Saul Friedländer almost matches the dramatic license to which the Protestant Rolf Hochhuth had recourse in his play *The Deputy*. Gerstein plays an important role in it as does Pope Pius XII. One sees Gerstein on the stage, having gained entry to the Vatican while on furlough, meeting again with the *nuncio* Msgr. Orsenigo, with whom he has already had a discussion in Berlin. This last point is false: the former SS officer himself wrote in his “confessions” that he was sent packing as soon as he presented himself at the nunciature in Berlin. In Rome, Gerstein converses with prelates very close to the Pope and vehemently reproaches them with the silence of the Sovereign Pontiff on the question of the extermination of the Jews in Poland. Thus, Hochhuth presents to us scenes of pure invention, and his theatrical exaggeration has shocked the entire world. But it must be said in his favor that Rolf Hochhuth was not writing as an historian but as a dramatist.

In conclusion, there is nothing whatever to indicate that Gerstein might have written any text at all prior to April 1945,⁵ either in 1942 or thereafter.

Gerstein's Biographers

Three books have dealt fundamentally with the Gerstein case; all three were published in the 1960's, after the almost worldwide presentation of Rolf Hochhuth's play, *The Deputy*, mentioned above.

It was by means of a dramatic work that the legend was woven of the SS officer Gerstein who, while the war was still going on, supposedly tried to let the whole world know of the massive extermination of Jews in the gas chambers. Certain Israeli and Protestant circles sought to have Gerstein rehabilitated: the former SS officer had not in fact been absolved posthumously in 1950 by a denazification board, which was content merely to accord him extenuating circumstances. The desired rehabilitation came about in 1965. The play *The Deputy* appeared at the end of 1962; it was at this period also that the Second Vatican Council opened, convoked by Pope

John XXIII.

— The first biography of Kurt Gerstein appeared in Zurich in 1964; it was the work of the German, Helmut Franz, himself the brother of a pastor, and was entitled *Kurt Gerstein, Aussenseiter des Widerstands der Kirche gegen Hitler* (Kurt Gerstein, Outsider of the Church Resistance against Hitler). An old friend of Gerstein's, Franz was active with him in the youth movements of the Evangelical Church between 1925 and 1933. He stayed in contact with Gerstein and saw him several times during the war. At the end of his book, Franz reproduces correctly, but also with deletions which he notes, the typewritten account in German dated 4 May 1945, the only one of which it seems he had knowledge, thanks to Hans Rothfels's publication (*op. cit.*).

— The second biography, written by Saul Friedländer, was published in France in 1967. Its title: *Kurt Gerstein ou l'ambiguïté du bien* (Kurt Gerstein or the Ambiguity of Good). In this book numerous details are found on the life of Gerstein before and then during the war. Our own researches have convinced us that certain of these details are not correct. As for the texts of the former SS officer which are quoted, it is obvious that Saul Friedländer borrowed them from Léon Poliakov. Later on, we shall see the use to which the latter has put them.

— In France also, in 1969, Pierre Joffroy marked a decisive turning point in titling his book *L'Espion de Dieu/La Passion de Kurt Gerstein* (God's Spy/The Passion of Kurt Gerstein). In this work, there is no longer a question of ambiguity as suggested by Saul Friedländer. Pierre Joffroy exerts himself to make the reader share his conviction that Gerstein is a sort of saint, an intermediary between God and men; the latter did not understand him and were, either directly or indirectly, responsible for his death in a Paris prison. The texts of the "confessions" known to Pierre Joffroy were three in number (*op. cit.*, page 283); the author reproduces in full and correctly the text we designate T II, not even improving Gerstein's often clumsy French, which can be discouraging to the reader (*op. cit.*, pages 283-290).

The Metamorphosis of the "Confessions"

In 1951, Léon Poliakov published his book *Le Bréviaire de la Haine* (The Breviary of Hate), with a preface by François Mauriac. We find in this work, on pages 220 to 224, a fairly long extract from one of Gerstein's narratives. To which version does it relate? Léon Poliakov writes that it bears "the certain date of 5 May 1945"; however, none of the six texts carries this date. Actually Léon

Poliakov has used the typewritten version in French dated 26 April 1945 (which we designate T II) and has made a partial copy of it that includes serious distortions and omissions.

In 1953, in Germany, Professor Hans Rothfels reprints the version in German dated 4 May 1945 (which we designate T III) in the *Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte* (Quarterly of Contemporary History) No. 2 - April 1953; this reproduction is faithful, but incomplete: deletions, which are noted by the author, have been made and all supplementary material has been omitted.

In France, Léon Poliakov's book *Le Bréviaire de la Haine* (The Breviary of Hate) is republished three times: in 1960, in 1974, and in 1979. The author adheres to the inaccurate text of 1951 and inserts sentences appropriated from the German version that Hans Rothfels made known to the public in 1953; he omits to inform the reader of these additions.

Léon Poliakov, Hans Rothfels, and various other writers who repeated the publications of the first two, had, in France, an attentive and critical reader in the person of Paul Rassinier.⁶ He was puzzled by the differences he remarked between one text and another; in particular, he took issue energetically with Léon Poliakov, whom he accused of presenting variant texts attributed to Gerstein while pretending, *every time*, to be reproducing the same document. Léon Poliakov did not reply to the criticisms of Paul Rassinier and has completely ignored them.

If we try to make a schedule of the utilization of the six known versions, we note:

1. T II and T III have been the versions most utilized for reproduction, sometimes complete, but more often partial and distorted.

2. T V has never been published in full; it has been used only in very fragmentary samplings whose source has never been indicated with exactitude.

3. T VI, although noted by Saul Friedländer (K.G., 1967, page 11), has also never been published, even in part.

4. T I can not heretofore have been known to readers except from the facsimile of pages 3 and 4 which is found in Saul Friedländer's book (*op. cit.*, pages 100-103).

5. Text IV, handwritten in French and dated 6 May 1945, was discovered by us in the Archives of the Evangelical Church of Bielefeld (Westphalia), in as much as no one, to our knowledge, ever called attention to it.

6. The additions (*Ergänzungen*) to the "confessions" T III and T IV have never been published at all.

We set out below the list, perhaps not exhaustive, of the reproductions of T II, T III, and T V.

I — T II (text typewritten in French dated 26 April 1945) has been reproduced:

1. completely and correctly by:

— Pierre Joffroy (*L'Espion de Dieu*/God's Spy, 1969, pages 283-290) who has only eliminated the biographical information at the beginning and the list of persons named by Gerstein as anti-Nazi at the end;

— Arthur R. Butz, Revisionist historian (*The Hoax of the Twentieth Century*, 1976, pages 251-258), who has nonetheless made some minor errors, notably in the spelling of proper names. This text in English comes from the official American translation of PS-1553. The most unfortunate error consists in the omission, from a phrase of the narrative, of the adverb "also." Thus one reads: "Naked in winter" instead of "Naked also in winter." Gerstein's visit to the Belzec camp having taken place in August, one could think that the SS officer places this month in the wintertime;

2. completely but incorrectly by:

— Léon Poliakov (*Le Monde Juif*/The Jewish World, March-April 1964, pages 4-12);

3. partially and correctly by:

— Adalbert Rückerl (*N.S. Vernichtungslager*/N.S. Extermination Camps, 1977, pages 61-66) in a German translation;

— Léon Poliakov (*Le Procès de Jerusalem*/The Jerusalem Trial, 1963, pages 224-228) who, in 1963, presents a text very different from those he published previously and from those he published subsequently.

4. partially and incorrectly by:

— Léon Poliakov (*Le Bréviaire de la Haine* /The Breviary of Hate, 1951 edition, pages 220-224) who claims he is reproducing the same document in the further editions of 1960, 1974, and 1979; whereas the reproductions in the later editions are even less faithful to the original text than in the 1951 edition. In each edition, the reproduction breaks off just before the sentence where Gerstein extravagantly estimates at 25 million the number of victims at only Belzec and Treblinka;

— Joe Heydecker and Johannes Leeb (*Der Nürnberger Prozess*/The Nuremberg Trial, 1958, pages 456-460) in a German translation, with serious inaccuracies, different from those one remarks in the case of Léon Poliakov.

II — T III (typewritten text in German dated 4 May 1945) has been reproduced:

1. correctly, but with deletions, by:

— Hans Rothfels (*Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte*/Quarterly of Contemporary History, 1953, pages 177-194) who has indicated

all his deletions and given numerous explanatory notes; the additions (*Ergänzungen*) number among the deletions;

Helmut Krausnick (*Dokumentation zur Massenvergasung/Documentation on the Mass Gassings*, 1956), who cites the publication of Hans Rothfels, but with fewer explanatory notes;

— Léon Poliakov and Josef Wulf (*Das Dritte Reich und die Juden/The Third Reich and the Jews*, 1955, pages 101-115) who quote the Hans Rothfels publication, with the same deletions, also more or less indicated, with fewer explanatory notes;

2. incorrectly and with deletions by:

— Léon Poliakov and Josef Wulf (*Le IIIe Reich et les Juifs/The Third Reich and the Jews*, 1959, pages 107-119). This text in French is stated to be the translation of the German text (*op. cit.* 1955, pages 101-115); it differs at several points from the German text but without it being possible to explain the inaccuracies merely as errors in translation;

3. partially and incorrectly by:

— Robert Neumann (*Hitler/Aufstieg und Untergang des Dritten Reiches/Hitler/The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, 1961, pages 190-192) who changes the number of persons crammed into a chamber of 25m² from 700/800 to 170/180.

III — T V (typewritten text in French dated 6 May 1945) has been reproduced:

1. fragmentarily but correctly by:

— Pierre Joffroy (*op. cit.*), who has taken excerpts from T V and reproduced them on different pages of his book.

2. fragmentarily and incorrectly by:

— Léon Poliakov (*Le Monde Juif/The Jewish World*, March-April 1964, pages 7-11), who has inserted six passages borrowed from T V into the Gerstein narrative which is presented, incorrectly moreover, as the reproduction of T II. Of these six passages set off by indentation from the rest of the text, there are two which are faithfully reproduced and four that contain inaccuracies.

In the above list, we have cited neither Saul Friedländer (*Kurt Gerstein ou l'ambiguïté du bien/Kurt Gerstein or the Ambiguity of Good*, 1967, pages 34, 73, 96-99, 104-108, 118-119, 143, 156-158) nor François Delpech (*Historiens et Géographes/Historians and Geographers*, No. 273, May-June 1979, pages 628-629), for both have simply copied the texts reproduced by Léon Poliakov. Finally, other authors—and these are the most numerous—have written of Gerstein, of his presumed rôle, of his revelations, but without publishing an extract from this or that “confession.” Among these we mention:

— Gerald Reitlinger: *The Final Solution* (1953), *The SS* (1956);

- Raul Hilberg: *The Destruction of the European Jews* (1961);
- Rolf Hochhuth: *Der Stellvertreter/The Deputy*, a stageplay produced in 1963, translated into several languages, notably into French under the title *Le Vicaire*;
- Jacques Nobécourt: *Le Vicaire et l'Histoire/The Deputy and History* (1963);
- Lucy S. Dawidowicz: *The War against the Jews* (1975);
- Gideon Hausner: *Justice at Jerusalem*, French translation (1976);
- John Toland: *Adolf Hitler* (1976); *et al.*

To this list it is appropriate to add historian Olga Wormser-Migot, who defended and published a thesis on *Le Système concentrationnaire nazi/The Nazi Concentration Camp System* (French Universities' Press 1968). But while the other writers mentioned do not question the veracity of Gerstein's statements, Olga Wormser-Migot expresses her skepticism. In particular she writes: "The recurring leitmotifs of the confession, including the prayers of the victims, are so identical to fifty other memoirs—including those of the Hoess *Mémoires*—that, for our part, we find it difficult to accept the complete authenticity of the Gerstein confession or the truth of all its elements" (*op. cit.* page 426).

In beginning the present thesis, we were therefore confronted by:

- six versions of the "confessions" written in three different languages;
- reproductions, often partial and distorted, of three of them only;
- utilization of these narratives by numerous writers who were content to make only a partial summary.

The fundamental task thus seemed to us: to establish the texts with a rigorous exactitude.

What follows is the text of the *Le Monde* article referred to on page 2:

The Hitler Policy of Extermination: A Declaration by the Historians

Since the end of the Second World War, it has happened on several occasions that publicists, sometimes taking the title of historians, have cast doubt on the veracity of the evidence on the Hitler policy of extermination. This evidence had, in 1945, a glaring obviousness. The great majority of the deportees today are dead. Their writings remain in the archives of the Third Reich, but this documentation does not always prevent reactions which are in the form of a "critique" in appearance only. To contend that Zyklon B merely extermi-

nated lice, it is really necessary to admit in one's conscience that the Jews, the Gypsies or if need be the Slavs, or men worn out by labor, were really only lice.

That said, it is natural that the generation which did not receive the shock of 1945 today asks itself questions. It is for their use, and not in reply to just any Tom, Dick, or Harry, that we are publishing this present declaration. We do so in our capacity as historians, which gives us no right but only a duty, that of being, through the schools of thought of which we are members, the servants of the humble truth, with only one mission, that long since put into words by the "Father of History": "To prevent what men have done from being effaced, by time, from human memory."

"Human Animals"

1. It is generally estimated that 6 million Jews, 200,000 Gypsies, and 100,000 Germans, the latter considered hereditarily degenerate, were exterminated in the course of the war. We must add to that several million Poles, Russians, and other Slavs, whose numbers were to be artificially reduced by hunger, the limitation on births, or extermination by reason of the needs of the SS state, its living space, and its contempt for "subhumans," for those whom Himmler called "human animals."

To these collective exterminations should be added their individual killings by the most varied methods—including poisoning by gas—of very many deportees: anti-Nazi Germans, resisters from the countries of western Europe—particularly the French—even common-law prisoners. Some of these killings arose from a "political" decision, others finished off the bodies of those who had become incapable of further work for the Nazi war machine.

2. The solidarity of the facts is established at the same time by the evidence of thousands of deportees, by the administrative documents coming from the archives of the Third Reich and which remain meaningful, even when written in what Eichmann called "*Amtsprache*" (bureaucratese) and, lastly, by the detailed confessions of the executioners.

3. This policy has gone through several stages. As far back as 1 September 1939, Hitler gave the order to kill off the German mentally ill, described as useless mouths. Six extermination centers with gas chambers were installed in Germany (Brandenburg, Grafeneck, Bernburg, Sonnenstein, Hartheim, Hadamar). In the face of the public protests of the German clergy, Hitler was, however, compelled in August 1941 to suspend this "euthanasia program."

In anticipation of the attack against the Soviet Union, Hitler

ordered the extermination of racial enemies in the territories to be conquered: the Jews, ideological adversaries, the communist "commissars," "asocial" elements, the Gypsies. At first, this extermination was essentially the work of the special detachments, the "Einsatzgruppen." They killed—principally by shooting but also by means of trucks equipped with an apparatus for gassing the occupants—a number of human beings difficult to estimate, perhaps two million. These methods involved psychological difficulties for the military and civil authorities and were not applied outside Soviet territory, the field *par excellence* of the ideological war. Everywhere else, the exterminations were effected thanks to the creation of special installations, principally in Polish territory. During the first months of 1942, five extermination camps over and above that of Auschwitz, which existed previously and which was then situated in the territory of the Reich, were created with all necessary installations and notably with gas chambers: Chelmo (1), Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka, and Maidanek. An adequate setting of the scene (disguise of the buildings as ordinary railway stations with the aid of appropriate posters and signs) was intended to mislead the victims, to prevent any desperate rebellions at the last moment. From among so very much evidence, which obviously can not come from those who have been killed, is it necessary to drag in that of the SS officer Gerstein who tried in vain to alert, as early as 1942, the civil and religious authorities on what was happening in these camps? Written by himself on 26 April 1945 for the French authorities in hesitant French, his account of what he saw at Belzec, indisputable in its essentials, is all the more moving:

"Myself with the Hauptmann Wirth, police, we find ourselves before the chambers of death. Totally naked, the men, the women, the young girls, the children, the babies, those with only one leg, all naked, pass. In a corner, a strong SS man, with a high unctuous voice, says to the poor people: 'Nothing will happen to you! it will not be necessary for you to do anything but breathe deeply, this makes the lungs strong, this inhalation, it is necessary against contagious diseases, it is a fine disinfection!' Asked what would be their fate, he says to them: 'Truly, the men must work, to build streets and houses. But the women are not obliged. Only if they wish they can help with the housework or in the kitchen.' For some of these poor people, little hope once more, enough to make them walk without resistance to the chambers of death, the majority know everything, the smell tells them their fate! Then they mount the little stairway and see the truth! Mothers, nursing mothers, the babies at the breast, naked, many children of all age, naked they hesitate, but they enter into the chambers of death, most without saying a word, pushed by

the others behind them, harried by the horsewhips of the SS. A Jewess, 40 years about, eyes like torches, calls down the blood of their children on their murderers. Receiving five blows of the horse-whip in the face from Hauptmann of police Wirth himself, she disappears into the chamber of gas. A great many make their prayers, some others say: 'Who is it who gives the water for death?' (Israelite rite?) In the chambers, the SS push the men. 'Fill up well' the Hauptmann has ordered. The naked men are standing on the feet of the others, 700-800 to 25 m², to 45 m³! The doors close."

Auschwitz

On 20 January 1942, explaining in front of a group of fifteen high officials what was already called "the final solution of the Jewish problem," the Minister of Police, Reinhard Heydrich, was content to say that a large part of the deported Jews "will eliminate themselves quite naturally by reason of their state of physical deficiency and that those remaining at the end of the account—whom we must consider as the most resistant—must be treated in consequence." Here we have a double euphemism: "to treat in consequence" meant in reality "to gas," and the least resistant elements, the women, the children, the aged, were treated in consequence upon their arrival at the places of extermination.

It was at Auschwitz that the Nazi plan of extermination was brought to perfection. Created in the summer of 1940, at first for political prisoners or Polish or German criminals, this camp, or this gigantic complex rather, covering some dozens of square kilometers, became at the same time a place for immediate extermination and a labor camp of especially inhumane working conditions. The average life expectancy of the detained was six months. It was in June 1941 that Himmler charged Rudolph Hoess, commandant of Auschwitz, with establishing an extermination camp there. After preliminary experiments carried out on Soviet prisoners, Hoess opted for the gas "Zyklon B," an insecticide product which was currently in use by the German army. From the springtime of 1942 convoys of Jews of all nationalities, including convoys from France, flocked to Auschwitz.

In each convoy, about three quarters of the deportees—the children, the aged, most of the women—straightaway took the path to the gas chambers of Auschwitz-Birkenau. Their cadavers were incinerated in vast crematoriums adjoining the asphyxiation installations. It was at Auschwitz also where, during the summer of 1944, the Gypsies of German nationality were exterminated. Finally, it was again at Auschwitz where numerous "medical experiments" were carried out, including the dissection alive of human beings.

These practices continued right up to the month of November 1944. On the orders of Himmler, the installations for murder, gas chambers, cremation ovens,⁷ were then destroyed, as one year previously the similar equipment at the Polish camps—with the sole exception of Maïdanek—had been destroyed.

The Auschwitz camp was evacuated before the Soviet advance at the very beginning of 1945. R. Hoess estimated the number of victims at two-and-a-half million gassed, and a half million dead in the camp properly so-called; these figures are certainly exaggerated, but it is not possible to give sure figures: the SS did not keep records of those who were taken immediately to the gas chamber.

The Evidence

4. A witness, a document, is always suspect. The criticism of texts is one of the fundamental rules of our profession. It is not possible, however, to suspect a gigantic collection of corroborative evidence, emanating from persons of all professions, of all levels of education; evidence which, in some instances, has been produced from legal proceedings in the course of a trial, where one has seen the judges, including German judges, become proportionately more and more strict as to the quality of the proof, as the immediate impression of horror which marked the end of the war has become more distant. Is it necessary to detail what all those have witnessed who have participated in the extermination process at whatever level, from the members of the “Sonderkommando” responsible for taking the victims to the gas chamber and for plundering the cadavers, right up to the commandant of Auschwitz in person?

5. One last word to finish. Everyone is free to interpret a phenomenon such as the Hitlerian genocide according to his own philosophy. Everyone is free either to compare it or not with other murder enterprises, previous, contemporary, subsequent. Everyone is free to refer to such and such sort of explanation; everyone is free, to the limit, to imagine or to dream that these monstrous deeds did not take place. Unfortunately, they did take place and no one can deny their existence without committing an outrage against the truth. It is not necessary to ask oneself how, technically, such a mass murder was possible. It was possible technically because it took place. Such is the obligatory point of departure for all historic enquiry on the subject. It concerns us simply to recall this truth: there is not, there cannot be, any debate on the existence of the gas chambers.

This text has been signed by the historians whose names follow and who work or teach at the College of France, at the National Center for Scientific Research, at the Universities of Paris and the

provinces, at the School of Advanced Studies in Social Science, at the Practical School of Advanced Studies: Philippe Arles, Alain Besançon, Robert Bonnaud, Fernand Braudel, Pierre Chaunu, Monique Clavel-Leveque, Mark Ferro, François Furet, Yvon Garlan, Jacques Juillard, Ernest Labrousse, Jacques Le Goff, Emmanuel Leroy Ladurie, Pierre Leveque, Nicole Loraux, Robert Mandrou, Claude Mossé, Roland Mousnier.

(1) At Chelmo, a camp established in December 1941, there were not stationary gas chambers, but a garage which housed “gas vans” similar to those which were used in Russia by the Einsatzgruppen.

Footnotes

1. Designated as Revisionists are those authors who, in the aftermath of the two world wars, considered it necessary, in reaction to the excesses of war-time propaganda, to reexamine or revise the history of those two conflicts in order to bring it into accord with the facts. The principal Revisionists of the First World War are the American Harry Elmer Barnes, the Britisher Lord Ponsonby, and the Frenchman Jean Norton Cru (*Témoins . . . Du Témoignage*). The principal Revisionists of the Second World War are the Frenchman Paul Rassinier (1906-1967) and his successor Robert Faurisson, the American Arthur Robert Butz, and the German Dr. Wilhelm Stäglich.
2. A shorthand report of the trial was made by the Cabinet J. Fleury, and approved by the *Tribunal de Grande Instance* of Paris. A copy of this document was made use of in preparing the present thesis. References to this report will be noted in brackets with the designation: CR. stenog. 1981. It was our opinion that we could not ignore the report of a trial which centered around the Gerstein "confessions" and in which not only Léon Poliakov, Pierre Joffroy, and Pierre Vidal-Naquet participated, but also the witnesses of 1942/1943, Baron von Otter, a diplomat stationed in Berlin, as well as two Dutchmen who were free workers in Berlin.
3. *Le Monde* is considered to be France's quality newspaper. Its reportage of events and issues on which it is well informed is sometimes above average. The editorial opinion writers of *Le Monde* sided with the propagandist historians in the later controversy caused by the Roques thesis. This difference of opinion could have contributed to an interesting debate, had *Le Monde's* journalists but taken the elementary precaution of reading the thesis beforehand, which they did not do, and consequently misled and misinformed their readers: firstly, through ignorance of the facts and, secondly, by treating the thesis as a racist and political issue. —R.V.P.
4. *Organe de Recherche des Crimes de Guerre*/Office for the Investigation of War Crimes. This was a French organization whose address was, in 1945, at 48 rue de Villejust, Paris.
5. There is a document written in Dutch and dated 25 March 1943; we are acquainted with it, but it is so suspect that none of the biographers of Gerstein have seen fit to mention it. It could be an antedated forgery.
6. From an early age, Rassinier was active in libertarian/anarchist movements. In 1939, he belonged to the left wing of the S.F.I.O. (*Section française de l'Internationale Ouvrière* – 2nd International = French Section of the Workers' International) and demonstrated a determined pacifism. During the occupation, he was one of the founders of a resistance movement. Arrested and tortured by the *Sicherheitsdienst* (S.D.) in 1943, he was deported to Buchenwald and to Dora. In 1945, he was declared one-hundred percent disabled and awarded compensation. He held several decorations including the Rosette of the Resistance. After a brief period in the National Assembly as S.F.I.O. deputy for Belfort, he withdrew from political life and devoted himself to historical research on the Nazi system of concentration camps. He did so on the basis of his personal experiences. Later, he became interested in the behavior of victors toward the vanquished, and investigated the causes of the Second World War.
7. Since, in a crematorium, bodies are not baked in ovens but incinerated in furnaces, when is some bold revisionist historian going to quit calling them ovens? — R.V.P.

Chapter I

Establishment of the Texts

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General Remarks

The reading and the comparative study of the six texts is tedious. Pierre Vidal-Naquet, testifying as a witness at the trial of 29 May 1981, said that their reproduction exactly as they are in the original, in what he calls a diplomatic edition, would be almost unreadable (CR. stenogr. 1981). In fact, such a reproduction is not unreadable, but simply wearisome.

In this chapter, we give for each version a translation into English from the original transcriptions.¹ To lighten the perusal of these documents, we have made two cuts:

— the first cut is at the beginning: this refers to biographical information on Gerstein for the period 1905-1938;

— the second cut is at the end: in certain versions, Gerstein has compiled a supplementary page carrying a list of the persons whom the SS officer names as anti-Nazis. It is this supplementary page which we have not reproduced.

The photocopies of the whole of the original documents constitute six appendices joined to the end of the thesis; these photocopies therefore include the parts which, in our transcription, were cut as mentioned above. We state clearly that the text of the cuts is not in dispute and varies very little from one version to another.²

Text TI

It is handwritten, composed in French, and dated 26 April 1945.

The original is preserved at the *Landeskirchliches Archiv der Evangelischen Kirche von Westfalen* in Bielefeld (Westphalia); it is document No. 32, classified in the margins 5,2. The archives of Bielefeld carry the designation LKA, which will be used in this present study. TI was sent to LKA by Elfriede Gerstein, widow of the former SS officer, on 14 August 1972.

It is composed of ten full pages of writing to which are added two other pages, which have the appearance of drafts and partly repeat passages from the ten preceding pages.

The tenth page, which moreover carries the number 9 (we shall explain the reason for this later on), is not considered by LKA as an integral part of document No. 32, but is classified separately; there is no doubt whatsoever that it should be incorporated in it. In fact, the ninth page of TI finishes with the words: "I had them written in my name" and the tenth page begins: "for—as I said—discretion, in truth to be somewhat free in the disposal . . ."

The connection between one page and the next is perfect.

T I — pages 2-3 (the latter also numbered 2)

. . . Hearing of the massacres of imbeciles and insane, shocked and wounded in my insides, having such a case in my family, I had only one wish: to see, to see into all this machinery and then: cry out to all the people!

Supplied with two references from the two employees of the Gestapo, having dealt with my case, it was not difficult to enter into the SS army. 10 March–2 June 1941, basic training of the soldier at Hamburg-Langenhorn, Arnhem and Oranienburg³ with 40 doctors — for my double studies — technics and medicine — I received the order to enter to the medico-technical service of the SS — *Fuehrungs-Hauptamt* — sanitary service of the SS Army.

At this place of service, I myself chose the duty to construct immediately stationary and motorized disinfection facilities, and filters for drinking water for the troops and for the prison camps. Having an exact knowledge of the industry, I succeeded at it soon, my predecessors not having succeeded. In this way, it was possible to reduce the number of deaths considerably. For my successes, I succeeded soon to Lieutenant. December 1941, once more, great danger. Hearing by chance of my entering the SS, the judge of the NSDAP who had sentenced my expulsion made great efforts to hunt and pursue me. But my chief, delighted with my successes, declared me sincere and indispensable. Because a large part of the disinfection service worked by means of prussic acid (Cyankali), it was necessary for me to take over also this service, but exclusively for disinfection.

T I — page 3 (numbered 2)

On 8 June 1942 SS-Sturmbannführer Guenther of the Reichssicherheitshauptamt, unknown to me, came into my workroom in civilian clothes. He gave me the order to take 100 kgs of prussic acid to a lorry and to go to a place which was known only to the driver. We left. At Kollin near Prague we loaded the lorry with the acid and came to Lublin/Poland. There, the SS Gruppenführer Globocnek[sic] was waiting for us. Having still a place in the vehicle, I had taken with me the SS-Obersturmbannführer Professor Dr. Pfannenstiel. Globocnek says to us: this thing is one of the most secret that there is. Anyone who speaks of it will be shot straight away. Yesterday, two talkers died. Then, he explained to us: at the moment, 17 August, 1942, there are 3 installations:

1 *Belzec* on the route Lublin-Lemberg in the sector at the Russian demarcation line. Maximum 15000 per day (seen!)

2 *Sobibor* I do not know exactly where, not seen!) 20,000 per day

maximum —

3 Treblinka — 120 km NNE of Warsaw [*sic*], seen, 25000 per day maximum.

4 Maidanneck [*sic*], near Lublin, (seen) in preparation

T I page 3 (numbered 2) and 4 (numbered 3)

You will have to — says Globocnek — do the disinfection of very large quantities of clothes, ten or twenty times the result of the *Spinnstoff-Sammlung*,⁴ which was done only to conceal the origin of Jewish clothing, Polish, Czech, etc. . . .

Your second duty: to change our chambers of gas, now functioning with the exhaust of an old “Diesel” engine to a thing more toxic and more quick, that is, prussic acid. But the Führer and Himmler, who were here on 15 August (the day before yesterday) made it my duty: every person who has to see the factories of death, must be accompanied by me (Globocnek) myself. Then Professor Pfannenstiel: But what does the Fuehrer say?

Then Glob: Faster, faster, to finish all the action, he says.

Then the Ministerialdirektor Dr. Lindner of Innenministerium: Was it not better to burn the bodies instead of burying them? Another generation, perhaps, will think of it in another manner.

Then Globocnek: Gentlemen, if, after us, there should ever come a generation that does not understand our work, so good, so necessary, that would be so cowardly [*carieuse* — *sic*] and rotten, then, gentlemen, all National Socialism was for nothing. On the contrary, we ought to put down bronze [*bronce*] tablets on which it is fixed that *we*, we have had the courage to accomplish this gigantic work. Then Hitler: Yes, my good Globocnek, that’s the word, that is also my opinion! —

T I — page 4 (numbered 3) and 5 (numbered 4)

The next day, we left for Belcek [*sic*]. A little station stands against the hill of yellow sand, immediately to the left (=N!) of the street and the railway line. To the south, near the highway, some service buildings, with the placard: Belcek Service Area of the SS Army — Globocnek introduced me to Hauptsturmführer Obermeyer of Pirmasens, who showed me with great reluctance the installations. On that day, we did not see the dead, but the smell of all the region, also of the highway, was pestilential. At the side of the little station, there was a big shed “Cloak Room” with a box-window “Valuables.” Then a room of 100 chairs “Hairdressers.” Then, a corridor 150m in the open air with barbed wire and signs: To the baths and inhalations!

Before us a house like a bathing institute, to the right and the left big concrete pot with geranium or begonia (flowers). After having mounted a small stairway, to the right and the left, three and three rooms like garages, 4 x 5m, 1 m 90 of height. On return, exits of wood. On the roof, the star of David in brass. Before the building, inscription: "Heckenholt Foundation." First afternoon I didn't see anything more.

Next morning, some minutes before 7 o'clock, it was announced: after 10 minutes, the 1st train! Truly after some minutes, the first train arrived from Lemberg, 45 cars, containing 6700 persons, 1450 already dead on their arrival. Behind the little windows with barbed wire, children, youngsters, full of fear, women, men. The train arrives: 200 Ukrainians, {Ukrains — *sic*} forced to this service, wrench open the doors and with leather horsewhips,⁵ they chase the people out of the cars.

Then, a big loudspeaker gives instructions: in the open air, — some in huts — take off all clothes, also artificial limbs, spectacles. With small string, given by a little Jewish boy of 3-4 years, to join together the shoes. To hand in all valuables, all money to the service window valuables without voucher, without tickets. Then, the women, the young girls to the hairdressers — to have their hair cut with one or two cuts of the hair, which disappears into big potato sacks, to make some special things for the submarines (linings, etc.) the SS-Unterscharführer on duty says to me.

T I — page 5 (numbered 4) and 6 (numbered 5)

Then the march begins: to the right, to the left, the barbed wire, behind the naked procession, two dozen Ukrainians with bayonets and the SS with their leather horsewhips. Guided by an extraordinarily pretty young girl, the procession advances. Myself with the biggest murderer of all times (Hitler and Himmler excepted), this Hauptmann of police Wirth, a bald little Swabian [*Suèbe* — *sic*] with gold spectacles.

We find ourselves before the death chambers. Totally naked, the men, the women, the young girls, the children, the babies, men with only one leg, everyone naked passes. At the corner, a strong SS man who with a high voice, says to the unfortunates: not the slightest thing will happen to you! It will not be necessary for you to do anything but breathe deeply, this makes the lungs strong, this inhalation it is necessary against contagious sicknesses, it is a fine disinfection. Asked what would be their fate, he said to them: Truly, the men must work, to build streets and houses. But the women are not obliged. Only if they wish, they can help with the housework or in the kitchen.

For some of these poor people, a little hope once more, enough to

make them walk without resistance to the death chambers. The majority knows everything — the smell tells them their fate! Then, they go up the little stairway and — see the truth. Mothers, nursing mothers with their babies at their breast, naked, a lot of children of all ages, naked, they hesitate and they enter into the death chambers, most without saying a word, pushed by the others behind them, harried by the horsewhips of the SS. A Jewess, 45 years approx, eyes like torches, calls down the blood of their children on their murderers. A great many say their prayers. Others say: Who is it who gives us the water for death (Israelite rite?). The Jewess with the flaming eyes receives 4, 5 blows in the face from the horsewhip of Hauptmann Wirth personally. In the chambers, the SS push the men “fill up well” the Hauptmann has ordered. The naked men are standing on each other’s feet, 700-800 to 25 m², 45 m³! The doors close.

T I — page 6 (numbered 5) and 7 (numbered 6)

Meanwhile, the rest of the train, naked, are waiting. Also in winter naked. They can catch their death, someone said! But, that’s what they’re here for, this was the reply of a young SS man — at this moment — I understand why “Heckenholt Foundation.” Heckenholt, — that’s the mechanic of the Diesel engine, the exhausts of which are intended to kill the unfortunates. SS Unterscharführer Heckenholt endeavors to get the Diesel going. But, it does not work! Hauptmann Wirth arrives. One sees, he is frightened, because me, I see the disaster. Yes, I see and wait. My “stop” watch has timed everything — 50 minutes, 70 minutes — the diesel does not work! The men are waiting in their chamber. In vain — one hears them crying “like at the synagogue” says SS Sturmbannführer Professor Doctor Pfannenstiel, professor of hygiene at the University of Marburg/Lahn, ear to the wooden door. Hauptmann Wirth, furious, takes a horsewhip [carache — *sic*]: 11, 12 blows to the face of the Ukrainian [Ukrain — *sic*], who is helping Heckenholt. After 2 hours 49 minutes — the “stop” watch has recorded everything — the Diesel starts. Up to this moment, the men in the four chambers already filled live, live, 4 times 750 persons to 4 times 45 m³!

Again, 25 minutes pass: a great many, it is true, are dead. One sees by the little window through which the electric light allows one to see for a moment the interior of the chamber. After 28 minutes still a few who survive, after 32, finally, all are dead! From the other side, the Jewish workers open the wooden doors. They have been promised for their terrible service, liberty and some percentage [procents — *sic*] of the results of the valuables.

**T I — pages 7 (numbered 6) and 8 (numbered 7) plus
extract from page 10 (not numbered)**

Like pillars of basalt, the dead are still standing, there being not the least place to fall or lean over. Even dead, one still knows the families who clasp hands yet dead. One has difficulty separating them, to empty the chambers for the next load. The blue bodies are thrown, damp with sweat [*soudre — sic*] and with urine, the legs full of excrement and menstrual blood. Among all, the babies, the bodies of children. But, one has no time. Two dozen workers busy themselves checking the mouths, which they open by means of iron hooks. “Gold to the left, without gold to the right!” Others check anus and genitals for money, gems, gold. Dentists tear out with a hammer [*martel — sic*] the gold teeth, bridges, crowns. Among them all, Hauptmann Wirth. He is in his element, handing me a large fruit can, full of gold teeth, he says to me: Feel the weight of the gold, only from yesterday and the day before! And you don’t believe [*croyez — sic*] what we find daily: dollars, gems, gold! But, see for yourself. Then he led me to the Jewish jeweller, who had the responsibility for all the valuables. I was made to see a director of the “Kaufhaus des Westens,”⁶ Berlin, who had duties with the work-detail and a little man with a violin [*violine — sic*], the chief of this Jewish work-detail. “This is a captain of the KK⁷ Army of Austria, knight of the German Iron Cross, first-class!”

Then the naked cadavers were thrown into large pits of 100 x 20 x 12 meters, situated near the death chambers. After some days, the bodies swelled and the whole rose up 2–3 meters by means of gas which formed in the cadavers. After some days, the swelling finished, the bodies fell together. Next day, the ditches were filled again and covered with 10 cm of sand.

[At the bottom of a supplementary page — the 10th page, but not numbered — which appears to be a draft, one reads the following text]

Some time later — I heard — grills were made of railway rails — and the cadavers burned by means of Diesel oil and gasoline, to make the cadavers disappear.

T I — page 8 (numbered 7)

Next day, we went with the car of Hauptmann Wirth to Treblinca [*sic*], about 120 km from Warsaw NNE. The setup at this place of death was almost the same as at Belzec, but yet bigger — 8 gas chambers and real mountains of clothes and underwear 35-40 meters high. Then, in our honor, a banquet was held with all the employees of the SS. The SS Obersturmführer Professor Dr.med. Pfannenstiel

made a speech [sermon — *sic*]: your work, it is a great duty and a duty so necessary. If one sees the bodies of the Jews, one understands the grandeur of your good work. The dinner itself was simple, but by order of Himmler himself, the employees [*occupés*] — *sic* of this service received what they wanted of butter, meat, etc... On departure [*Au Congé* — *sic*], we were offered several kilos of butter and a large number of bottles of spirits. Me, I told the lie of having enough of everything from our farm. For this reason, Pfannenstiel took also my portion.

We went with the car to Warsaw. Sleeping car being already gone, I was waiting for the other train. Waiting in vain for my empty bed, I met the secretary [of] the Swedish legation, Baron von Otter. All the beds were occupied, we were passing the night in the corridor of the sleeping car. Then, under the fresh impression, I told him everything with the prayer to refer everything to his government and to the Allies. He asked me for a reference of myself. I gave him the address of General Superintendent Dr. Otto Dibelius, Berlin-Lichterfelde, Brüderweg 2, friend of Reverend Martin Niemöller and head of the Protestant resistance against Nazism.⁸ After some weeks, I saw the Legation Counsel[or] Von Otter one more time. He told me that he had made his report to the government [of] Sweden, a report which, according to his words, had great influence on the relations [of] Sweden and Germany.

T I — page 8 (numbered 7) and 9 (numbered 8)

My attempt to refer all that to the head of the legation of the Holy Father did not have a great success. I was asked whether I was a soldier. Then I was refused all discussion. Then, I had all that told to him by Msgr. Doctor Winter, secretary of the Catholic Episcopate of Berlin. On going out of the legation of the Holy Father at the Rauchstrasse in Berlin, I saw myself followed by a policeman who, after some very unpleasant minutes quit following me [*me quitta* — *sic*].

In my apartments at Berlin W 15, Buelowstrasse 47/1, I had around me a circle of anti-Nazis. One of the members came some time later with the Press Attaché of the Swiss Legation at Berlin, Dr. Hochstrasser, to whom I recounted, as to the other members, all that I knew. Another member of this circle, the Reverend Buchholz, chaplain of the Ploetzensee prison, who accompanied to the death the officers of 20 July 1944.⁹ Msr. Buchholz and Msgr. Niemöller received from my part from time to time [here an illegible word] a large number of cigarettes and cigars and other gifts as tokens of love [*d'autres dotations d'amour* — *sic*].

[On a supplementary page — the 11th. but not numbered — which appears to be a draft, one reads the following text:]

At Belcec and at Treblinca, one did not give oneself the trouble to count in a fairly accurate manner the number of men killed. If one had found the passports etc . . . , it would have related to a very small part of all the number of dead. Most died nameless. This is valid also for the Poles and Czechoslovaks who disappeared in the same death chambers. They were chosen for death by commissions of pseudo-doctors, simple young men with limousines and white coats, who toured the villages in order to, on sight, earmark the aged, sick, etc. *[sic]*. . . who were no longer worthy to live for not being able to work anymore.

Hauptmann Wirth begged me not to propose any other method whatsoever to Berlin and leave all as it was. I lied that the prussic acid was already destroyed by the transport and very dangerous and to being forced to bury the acid, *[which]* was done immediately.

T I — page 9 (numbered 8) and page 10 (numbered 9) — the first 6 lines only

I must yet add that *SS-Sturmbannführer* Günther, at the beginning of 1944, asked me for large quantities of prussic acid for an obscure purpose *[destin — sic]*. The acid was to be supplied to Oranienburg and Auschwitz, concentration camps *[champs — sic]*. I loyally had the acid sent as requested. But immediately after its arrival, I diverted it for disinfection. This was a little *[quelquement — sic]* dangerous for me, but if I had been asked where the acid was, I would have said: it was already in a state of dangerous decomposition, and because of that I had to use it up for disinfection. I am sure that Günther, according to his own words, had the order to obtain it to eventually kill many men. The invoices *[notas — sic]* for this supply, altogether 2,175 kg., enough to kill several millions of men, I have on me. I had them written in my name, for — as I said — discretion, in truth to be somewhat free in the disposal and to be better able to divert the toxic acid.

I never paid the delivery. The manager of the firm, Dr. G. Peters, Friedberg/Hessen, who supplied the acid, told me that he supplied — to kill men — prussic acid in ampoules.

T I — page 10 (numbered 9) from the seventh line to the end

On 22 April 1945, I had awaited the taking of the town of Metzingen/Wurttemberg. I had given the advice to the citizens and at the Town Hall of Metzingen to give up the town to the French. The

inhabitants being ready, German troops to hold Metzingen were announced. Then, I passed the French lines and I presented myself, of my own accord, voluntarily, to Monsieur the French Commandant of the town of Reutlingen. I presented my papers to him, to wit:

- 2 Gestapo arrest warrants
- expulsion from the party NSDAP
- special reference from the office of Pastor Martin Niemöller
- military papers.

Having examined [*éprouvés—sic*] the papers, M. le Commandant of Reutlingen gave me a paper with the following text: “The bearer is not a real SS and must not be treated as such, but, on the contrary, with every consideration.”

It was M. le Commandant of Reutlingen who proposed, according to my wishes, that I should be turned over to a place of service which would be interested in my knowledge of Nazism and which, perhaps, would make use of my anti-Nazism. Unfortunately, the papers (2 arrest warrants from the Gestapo, etc.... stayed at Tübingen, Gartenstr. 24 in the corridor of my house, where I was again given permission to pick up a shirt, toothbrush.

[Not having found in the archives of the Bielefeld (LKA) any other page beyond this page 9, I take note that it is here that the handwritten “confession” in French of 26 April 1945 abruptly terminates. There are still two supplementary unnumbered pages which essentially repeat passages from the preceding pages; whatever there is new we have inserted in the whole of the “confession” and indicated accordingly.—H.R.]

Text T II

It is typewritten, composed in French, dated 26 April 1945. It consists of 6 pages (of which the last carries the handwritten signature: “Kurt Gerstein”), to which there is added a seventhth page entitled: “Kurt Gerstein — Supplement”, unsigned.

We have a photocopy which comes from the National Archives in Washington; at the foot of each page there is a stamped number preceded by a B. Thus the seven pages are numbered from B 49357 to B 49363.

Transcription of T II (first sheet)

Hearing of the massacres of the imbeciles and mentally sick at Grafeneck, Hadamar, etc., shocked and wounded in my inside, having such a case in my family, I had but one wish: to look into, to look into

all this machinery and then cry out to all the people! — supplied with two references from two employees of the Gestapo, having dealt with my case, it was not difficult to enter into the SS army. 10 March–2 June 1941 basic training at Hamburg-Langenhorn, Arnhem, and Oranienburg with 40 doctors. For my double studies — technical and medicine — I received the order to enter into the medico-technical service of SS-Fuehrungshauptamt — sanitary service of the SS army — Amstgruppe D, Hygiene. At this place of service I myself chose the duty to construct immediately appliances for disinfection and filters of drinking water for the troops and for the prison and concentration camps. Having exact knowledge of the industry I soon succeeded at it — my predecessors not being successful. In this way, it was possible to reduce the number of dead prisoners considerably — for my successes, I succeeded soon to lieutenant. — December 1941, the tribunal which had ordered my expulsion from the NSDAP received knowledge of my entry into the SS army. Great efforts were made to hunt me and personally hound me. But due to my successes I was declared sincere and indispensable. — January 1942, I was the head of the technical service of disinfection, containing also the service of severely toxic gases for disinfection.

Transcription of T II (second sheet)

End of page numbered 1 in the original

— On 8 June 1942 he entered into my workroom, SS-Sturm-bannfuehrer Guenther of the ReichsSicher-

Page numbered 2 in the original

ReichsSicherheitsHauptamt, in civilian clothes, unknown to me. He gives me the order to obtain 100 kg of prussic acid and to go with it to a place which was not known except to the driver of the lorry. We left for the potash factory near Collin (Prague). The lorry loaded, we left for Lublin-Poland. We took with us professor Dr. med. Pfannstiel, professor of hygiene at the university of Marburg/Lahn. — At Loublin [*sic*], the SS-Gruppenfuehrer Globocnek awaited us. He says to us: this is one of the most secret things that there are, and even the most secret. Anyone, who speaks of it, will be shot immediately. Yesterday, two talkers died. Then he explains to us: At the moment, — 17 August 1942 — there are three installations:

1.) Belcec, on the route Loublin-Lemberg, in the sector at the Russian demarcation line. Maximum per day 15,000 persons. (Seen!)

2.) Sobibor, I do not know exactly where. Not seen. 20,000

pers.p.day.

3.) Tréblinca, 120 km NNE of Warsawa. 25,000 per day. Seen!

4.) Maidannek, near Loublin, seen in preparation. —

Transcription of T II (third sheet)

Continuation of the page numbered 2 in the original

— Globocnek says: You must do the disinfection of very large quantities of clothes, ten or twenty times the result of the “*Spinnstoffsammlung*,” (collection of clothes and textiles), which is done only to obscure the origin of Jewish clothing, Polish, Czech, etc. — Your other duty will be to change the service of our gas chambers, now functioning by the exhaust of an old “Diesel” engine, to a thing more toxic and functioning more quickly, that is prussic acid. But the Fuehrer and Himmler, who were here the 15 August — that is the day before yesterday — have obliged me to accompany personally all those who must see the installations. — Then Professor Pfannenstiel: But what does the Fuehrer say? — Then Globocnek, now Chief of Police and SS Adriatic coast at Trieste: Faster, faster, to finish all the action! — he says. Then the director of the ministry, Dr. Herbert Lindner, Interior Minister: Was it not better to burn the bodies instead of burying them? Another generation, perhaps, would think of it another way... Then Globocnek: But gentlemen, if ever, after us, there should be a generation so cowardly, so rotten, that it would not understand our work so good, so necessary, then — gentlemen — all the National Socialism was for nothing. — But, on the contrary, we should put down bronze tablets on which it is inscribed, that it was we, we, who have had the courage to realise this gigantic work! “ — Then Hitler: yes, my good Globocnek, that’s the word, that’s also my opinion! —

Transcription of T II (Fourth sheet)

— The next day, we set out for Belcek. A special little station with two platforms stands against the hill of yellow sand, immediately to the North of the street and of the railway Lublin-Lemberg. To the south, near the highway, some service buildings with the placard: “Belcec service area of the SS army” — . Globocnek introduced me to SS-Hauptsturmfuehrer Obermeyer of Pirmasens, who with great reluctance showed me the installations. That day, we did not see the dead, but the smell of all the region, also of the big highway, was pestilent. At the side of the little station there was a large hut “Cloakroom” with a service window “Valuables.” Then, a room of

100 chairs “hairstylists.” Then a corridor of 150 meters in the open air, barbed wire on two sides, and signs: “To the baths and inhalations”! — Before us a building like a bathhouse, to the right and left large concrete pot with geranium or other flowers. After having mounted a small stairway, to the right and left, three and three rooms like garages, 4 x 5 meters, 1.90 metre of height. On return, not visible, exits of wood. On the roof, the star of David in brass. Before the building inscription: “Heckenholt Foundation”. — More — that afternoon — I did not notice. — Next morning, some minutes before 7 o’clock, it was announced:

Page numbered 3 in the original

After ten minutes the first train will arrive! — Truly, after some minutes the first train arrived from Lemberg, 45 cars, containing 6,700 persons, 1450 already dead on their arrival. Behind the little windows with barbed wire, children, youngsters, full of fear, women, men. The train arrives. 200 Ukrainians, forced to this service, wrench open the doors and, with leather horsewhips, they chase the people out the cars. Then a big loudspeaker gives instructions: In the open air, some in the shed, take off all clothes, also artificial limbs and spectacles. With a little bit of string, offered by a Jewish boy of 4 years, to tie together the shoes. To turn in all valuables, all money at the service-window “Valuables” without voucher, without receipt. Then the women, the young girls to the hairstylist — to have their hair cut with one or two cuts of the hair, which disappears into large potato sacks “to make of it something special for the submarines, linings, etc”. — the SS-Unterscharführer of the service tells me.

Transcription of T II (fifth sheet)

Continuation of page numbered 3 in the original

Then, the march begins: To the right, to the left the barbed wire, at the rear two dozen Ukrainians with rifle, led by an extraordinarily pretty young girl, they approach. Myself with Hauptmann Wirth, police, we find ourselves before the death chambers. Totally naked, the men, the women, the young girls, the children, the babies, those with only one leg, all naked, pass. In a corner, a strong SS man, who in a loud unctuous voice says to the poor people: not the slightest thing will happen to you! It will not be necessary for you to do anything but breathe deeply, this makes the lungs strong, this inhalation, it is necessary against contagious diseases, it is a fine disinfection! — Asked, what would be their fate, he says to them: Truly, the men must

work, to build streets and houses. But the women are not obliged. Only if they wish they can help with the housework or in the kitchen. — For some of these poor people little hope once more, enough to make them walk without resistance to the death chambers, — the majority know everything, the smell tells them their fate! — Then they mount the little stairway and — see the truth! Mothers, nursing mothers, babies at the breast, naked, many children of all age, — naked — they hesitate, but they enter the death chambers, most without saying a word, pushed by the others behind them, harried by the horsewhips of the SS. — A Jewess, 40 years about, eyes like torches, calls down the blood of their children on their murderers. Receiving 5 blows of the horsewhip in the face from Hauptmann of police Wirth himself, she disappears into the gas chamber. A great many say their prayers, some others say: Who is it who gives us the water for death? (Israelite rite?) — In the chambers, the SS push the men. “Fill up well” — Hauptmann Wirth has ordered. The naked men are standing on the feet of others, 700–800 to 25 square meters, to 45 m cube! — The doors close.

Transcription of T II (sixth sheet)

Continuation and end of the page numbered 3 in the original

Meanwhile, the rest of the train, naked, are waiting. Someone says to me: also in winter naked! — But they can catch their death! — But that’s what they’re here for! was the reply! at, this moment, I understand why “Heckenholt Foundation.” Heckenholt, that’s the operator of the “diesel,” the exhausts of which are intended to kill the poor people! SS-Unterscharführer Heckenholt endeavors to get the diesel started. But it does not work! Hauptmann Wirth arrives. One sees, he is frightened, because me, I see the disaster. Yes, I see all, and I wait. My “stop” watch has timed everything. 50 minutes, 70 minutes, — the diesel is not working! The men are waiting in their gas chambers. In vain. One hears them crying. “Like at the synagogue,” — says the SS-Sturmbannführer Professor Dr. Pfannenstiel, graduate of hygiene of the university of Marbourg/Lahn, ear to the wooden door. Hauptmann Wirth, furious, makes 11, 12 blows of the horsewhip to the face of the Ukrainian, who is helping Heckenholt. — After two hours 49 minutes the stopwatch has recorded everything — the Diesel starts. Up to this moment the men in the four chambers already filled live, live, 4 times 750 persons 4 times 45 cubic meters! Again

Page numbered 4 in the original

25 minutes pass: Many, it is true, are dead. That’s what one sees by

the little window through which the electric light allows one to see for a moment the interior of the chamber. After 28 minutes, still a few who survive. After 32 minutes, finally — , all are dead! — From the other side, the Jewish workers open the wooden doors. They have been promised — for their terrible service — freedom and some percentage of the result of the valuables and of the money found.

Transcription of T II (seventh sheet)

Continuation of the page numbered 4 in the original

Like pillars of basalt the dead are still standing, there not being the slightest room to fall or lean over. Even dead, one still knows the families, who still clasp hands. One has difficulty separating them, to empty the chambers for next load. The bodies are thrown, blue, damp with sweat and urine, the legs full of excrement and menstrual blood. Among all, the babies, the cadavers of children. — But one has not time! Two dozen workers busy themselves checking the mouths, which they open by means of iron hooks. “Gold to the left, without gold to the right!” — Others check anus and genitals for money, gems, gold etc. — Dentists tear out by means of hammers the gold teeth, bridges, crowns. Among them all, Hauptmann Wirth. He is in his element, handing me a large fruit tin, full of teeth, he says to me: Feel for yourself the weight of the gold! This is only from yesterday and the day before yesterday! — And you do not believe what we find daily! Dollars, gems, gold! But see for yourself: — then he led me to a jeweller, who had the responsibility for all the valuables. I was shown also one of the heads of the large shop of the west, Berlin, Kaufhaus des Westens and a little man, who was made to play the violin, heads of the Jewish work detail. “This is a captain of the K and K army of Austria, knight of the German Iron Cross I class — Hauptsturmfuehrer Obermeyer says to me. — Then the naked corpses were thrown into large ditches of about 100 x 20 x 12 meters, situated near the death chambers. — After some days, the bodies swelled and the whole rose 2-3 meters by means of gas, which formed in the cadavers. After some days, the swelling finished, the bodies fell together. Next day the ditches were filled again and covered with 10 cm of sand. — Some time later — I heard — grills were made of railway rails — and the bodies burned by means of diesel oil and petrol, to make the cadavers disappear.

Transcription of T II (eighth sheet)

Continuation of the page numbered 4 in the original

At Belcek and at treblinca [sic], no one took the trouble to count in a reasonably exact manner the number of men killed. The numbers made known by British Broadcasting Co. [sic] Radio are not accurate, in truth it will be a matter altogether of ca 25,000,000 [sic] men! Not Jews, only, but in preference Poles and Czechs biologically without value according to the opinion of the Nazis. Most are nameless dead. Commissions of pseudo-doctors, simple young SS in white coats and limousines, toured the villages and towns of Poland and Czechoslovakia to select out the old, consumptives, sick in order some time later, to make them disappear into the gas chambers. It was the Poles, the Czechs of No. III, who were no longer worthy to live because of not being able still to work. — Hauptmann of Police Wirth begged me not to propose to Berlin any other method of the gas chambers and to leave everything as it was. — I lied — which I had done in every case — that the prussic acid was already destroyed by transport and become very dangerous. So I shall be forced to bury it — which was done straight away.

Transcription of T II (ninth sheet)

Continuation and end of the page numbered 4 in the original

— Next day, we went in Hauptmann Wirth's car to Treblinca. About 120 km NNE of Warsaw. The setup at this place of death was almost the same as at Belcec, but still bigger. 8 gas chambers and real mountains of clothes and underwear, about 35-40 m. Then, in our "honor" a banquet was held with all the employees of the installation. The Obersturmbannfuehrer professor dr. med. Pfannenstiel, professor of hygiene at the university of Marburg/Lahn, gave a speech: Your work it is a great duty and a duty so useful and so

Page numbered 5 in the original

necessary. To me alone, he spoke of this institution as "beauty of work and as a humane thing." To all: If one sees the bodies of the Jews one understands the grandeur of your good work! — The dinner itself was simple, but by Himmler's order the employees of this service received what they wanted of butter, meat, alcohol etc. On leaving we were offered several kilos of butter and a large number of bottles of liquor. I had trouble lying about having enough of all from our farm. For this reason Pfannenstiel took also my share. — We went by car to Warsaw. Waiting in vain for an empty bed, I met the secretary of the Swedish legation, Msr. le Baron de Otter. All the beds occupied, we

passed the night in the corridor of the sleeping car. There, under my recent impression I told him everything with the plea to refer everything to his government and to all the Allies. He asked me for a personal reference. I gave him as such the address of the Generalsuperintendent D. Otto Dibelius, Berlin-Lichterfelde West, Bruederweg 2, friend of Martin Niemoeller and head of the Protestant resistance against Nazism. After some weeks I saw the Baron de Otter again two times. He told me that he had made his report to the Swedish government, a report, which, according to his words, had great influence on the relations of Sweden and Germany.

Transcription of T II (tenth sheet)

Continuation of the page numbered 5 in the original

My attempt to refer all that to the head of the legation of the Holy Father, did not have great success. I was asked whether I was a soldier; then I was refused all discussion. Then I made a detailed report to the secretary of the episcopate of Berlin Msr. Dr. Winter in order to refer all that to his bishop of Berlin and likewise to the legation of the Holy Father. — Going out of the legation of the Holy Father at the Rauchstrasse at Berlin, I had a dangerous encounter with a policeman, who followed me, but, after some very unpleasant minutes he let me escape.

Transcription of T II (eleventh sheet)

Continuation and end of the page numbered 5 in the original

I must still add that the SS Sturmbannfuehrer Guenther of the Reichssicherheitshauptamt at the beginning of 1944 asked me for very big supplies of prussic acid for an obscure purpose. The acid was to be supplied at Berlin, Kurfuerstenstrasse at his place of work. I succeeded in making him believe that that was not possible due to the great dangers. It was a matter of several freight cars of toxic acid, enough to kill a lot of men, millions! He had said to me that he was not sure, if, when, for what group of persons, in what manner, where one would have need of this poison. I do not know exactly what the intention of Reichssicherheitshauptamt and of the SD may have been. But I thought later of the words of Goebbels "to close the doors after them, if Nazism should never succeed." Perhaps they wanted to kill a great part of the German people, perhaps the foreign workers, perhaps the prisoners of war — I do not know! In any case, I diverted the acid immediately after its arrival for disinfection duties.

This was somewhat dangerous for me, but if anyone had asked me where the toxic acid was, I would have replied: it was already in a dangerous state of dissolution, and for that reason I had to use it up for disinfection — I am sure that Guenther, son of the Rassen-Guenther, to use his own words, had the order to obtain the acid for — eventually — killing millions of men, perhaps also in the concentration camps. I have on me the invoices for 2,175 kg, but in truth it concerns about 8500 kgs, enough to kill 8 million men. I had the invoices made out in my name out of discretion — I said —in truth to be somewhat free in the disposition and in order to better make the toxic acid disappear. I never paid for these deliveries to avoid reimburse-

Page numbered 6 in the original

ment and remind the SD of this stock. The manager of the Degesch, who supplied this acid, told me he supplied prussic acid in ampoules to kill men. —

Transcription of T II (twelfth sheet)

Continuation and end of the last page of the original numbered 6

One other time, Guenther consulted me as to whether it was possible to kill large numbers of Jews in the open air in the fortification moats of Maria-Theresienstadt.¹⁰ To prevent this diabolical idea, I declared this method impossible. Some time later I heard that the SD supplied itself some other way with prussic acid to kill those poor men at Theresienstadt. — The most detestable concentration camps were not Oranienberg nor Dachau nor Belsen — but Auschwitz (Oswice) and Mauthausen-Gusen near Linz/Donau. It is there that millions of men disappeared into the gas chambers, in autos like gas chambers. The method of killing children was to hold a pad of prussic acid under the nose. I — myself — saw experiments continued right up till death with living persons in the concentration camps. In this way, SS-Hauptsturmführer Gundlach, Dr. med, made such experiments in the concentration camps for women at Ravensbrück near Fuerstenberg-Mecklenburg. I read a lot of reports — at my duty station — of such experiments at Buchenwald, for example experiments right up to 100 tablets of Pervitine per day. Other experiments — every time approx. 100–200 persons — are made right up till death with serum, lymph, etc. Himmler had personally reserved to himself the permission for such experiments

One day, at Oranienberg, concentration camp, I saw all the prisoners who were there for being perverts (homosexuals) done away with

in a single day.

I avoided visiting the concentration camps often because it was usual — in preference at Mauthausen-Gusen — near Linz —, to take one or two prisoners in honor of visitors. At Mauthausen, it was usual to make the Jews work at a quarry of great height — . After some time the SS men on duty said: Attention, after some minutes there will be some misfortune! Indeed, one or two minutes later, some Jews were thrown from the quarry, falling dead at our feet. “Work accidents” — was recorded on the papers of the killed. — Dr. Fritz Krantz, anti-Nazi, SS-Hauptsturmfuehrer often told me of such things, which he sharply condemned and often made known. —

The crimes discovered at Belsen, Oranienberg etc. are not considerable in comparison with others that were done at Auschwitz and at Mauthausen.

It is my intention to write a book containing my adventures with the Nazis.

I am ready to swear under oath that all my statements are completely true.

Text T III

It is typewritten, composed in German, dated 4 May 1945.

It is not signed.

It is made up of 24 half-pages numbered 1 to 24 plus a half page (zu 7) handwritten, inserted between half page 7 and half-page 8; to which should be added also eight half pages of supplements (*Ergänzungen*). This is the document 31 of LKA, which retains a typewritten carbon-copy. Doctor Steinberg, Director of LKA, told us that the original had never been found.

T III was sent to LKA by Elfriede Gerstein on 31 July, 1972.

We have photocopies measuring 21 cms x 29.5 cms; on each one of them, there are two half pages. The pages photocopied are numbered by hand, at the top on the right, from 244 to 261.

The translation of the German text was made by us. We had at first intended to use the French translation published in *Le IIIe Reich et les Juifs* (The Third Reich and the Jews), 1959, by Léon Poliakov and Josef Wulf, but quickly gave that up.

In fact, as early as the half page No 3, we noticed that the authors mentioned translated the following German words: “*in diese Öfen und Kammern hineinzuschauen*” by: “throw a glance in these places.” Actually, it must be translated: “cast a glance into these ovens and these chambers.” Perhaps Messers. Poliakov and Wulf considered it hardly logical that Gerstein seems to know *in advance* that he was going to find the ovens and the poison gas chambers.

Furthermore, we noticed very many inexactitudes which we had to correct. Finally, the published text contained several cuts in the principal "confession" and completely ignored the supplements (*Ergänzungen*), which have never been published until this day.

In general outline, the authors of *Le IIIe Reich et les Juifs* translated the account already published by Professor Doctor Hans Rothfels, in 1953, in No 2. of the review *Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte* (Quarterly of Contemporary History); but they did not explain their cuts by explanatory notes as did Hans Rothfels; and they have not informed the reader of the existence of the supplements, regarding which the German historian wrote that they do not relate to eyewitness evidence but "*Hörensagen*" (hearsay).

T III — Half pages 3 (end), 4 and 5 (beginning)

Having heard that they were beginning to kill off the mentally sick at Grafeneck, Hadamar, and elsewhere, I decided in any event to throw look into these ovens and these chambers in order to know what is going on. The more so because a sister-in-law by marriage was a victim of this forced murder at Hadamar. Supplied with two recommendations issued by officials of the State Secret Police who handled my case, I succeeded without difficulty in joining the SS. These gentlemen were of the opinion that my idealism, which they probably admired, would not fail to serve the Nazi cause. I took my classes at Hamburg-Langenhorn, at Arnhem/Holland and at Oranienburg.

In Holland, I made contact immediately with the Dutch resistance movement (the certificated engineer Ubbink, at Doesburg). By reason of the double course of studies that I had made, I did not delay entering into the technical medical services and I was attached to the Central Office of the SS Command, work group D, sanitary service of the *Waffen* SS Hygiene Section. I received my training by following a medical course attended by 40 doctors. In the hygiene service, I was free to determine my own activities. I had some appliances made for disinfection, mobile and stationary, for the soldiers, the prison camps and concentration camps. This was worth to me, without my having merited them, big successes, and from that moment I passed for a sort of technical genius. Actually we managed at least to stem a little the terrible wave of exanthematous typhus of 1941 in the camps. Due to my successes I soon became second lieutenant and first lieutenant. At Christmas 1941, the tribunal which had ordered my expulsion from the party learned of my entry into the SS to a position of command. There followed a campaign directed against me in the course of which I was hounded like an animal. But because of my successes and my personality, the section to which I belonged protected me and kept me

in my position.

In January 1942, I became "head of section" in the Technical Section of Health and I was at the same time assigned to double duty in the same sector by the chief medical officer (Reichsarzt) of the SS and of the police. In this capacity I was assigned all the technical service of disinfection, including disinfection relating to highly toxic gases.

T III — Half pages 5 (end), 6 and 7 (beginning)

It was while in this capacity that I received, on 8 June 1942, the visit of SS-Sturmbannführer Günther, of the Central Office of Security of the Reich, Berlin W, Kurfürstenstrasse, a person I did not know till then. Günther came in civilian clothes. He gave me the order to have brought immediately, for an ultrasecret mission relating to the Reich, 100 kg of prussic acid and to transport it in an auto to an unknown place of which only the driver knew the name.

Then, some weeks later, we left for Prague. I could almost imagine the kind of mission this was, but I accepted it because in this way by chance it presented me with an opportunity, long awaited, of sticking my nose into these matters. In addition, in my position as expert on prussic acid, I possessed so much authority and competence that it had to be easy for me, in any circumstances, to declare under whatever pretext that the prussic acid was unusable because decomposed or something of that sort, and to prevent its being used with the murderous purpose he had in mind. With us, rather by chance, was Professor Pfannenstiel, doctor of medicine, SS-Obersturmbannführer, holder of the chair of hygiene at the University of Marbourg-Lahn.

Next we left by car for Lublin where SS-Gruppenführer Globocnek was waiting for us. At the factory at Collin, I had purposely thrown out hints that the acid was intended to kill human beings. Also, it was not long before that, in the afternoon, a person appeared who showed a great deal of interest in the vehicle and who, as soon as he saw himself observed, ran away with all speed. Globocnek said, "All this affair is one of the most secret things in existence at this moment; one can say: the most secret. Anyone who speaks about it will be shot on the spot. No later than yesterday two talkers were shot." Then he declared to us: "Actually — this was 17 August 1942 — we have three installations in service, which are:

- 1) **Belzec**, on the road and railway Lublin-Lemberg¹¹ at the intersection of the demarcation line with Russia. Maximum output per day: 15,000 persons.

- 2) **Sobibor**. Also in Poland, I do not know exactly where. Maximum output: 20,000 persons per day.

3) Treblinka, 120 km north-north-east of Warsaw. Maximum output, 25,000 persons per day.

4) Still in Preparation: Maïdanek, near Lublin.”

In the company of director of these establishments, Captain of Police Wirth, I personally inspected Belcec, Treblinka and Maïdenek right down to the details.

T III — Half pages 7 (end), zu 7 (handwritten half page also numbered 7), 8 and 9 (beginning)

Globocnek addressed himself exclusively to me in saying: It is your task to carry out successfully the disinfection of very important quantities of textiles. The collection of textiles has in fact been done only in order to explain the origin of the clothes for the workers in the East etc. and to present them as the result of the sacrifice accepted by the German people. In reality, the output of our establishments is from 10 to 20 times superior to the whole of the collection of textiles.

(I afterwards discussed with firms capable of this work the possibility of disinfecting such quantities of textiles — the textiles — at least, it was a matter of about 40,000 tons, 60 full trains of merchandise — in the existing laundries and disinfection establishments. But it was completely impossible to place such large orders. I turned to profit all these negotiations, to make known or cleverly to hint at the fact of the murder of the Jews. Globocnek then expressed himself as satisfied that all this heap should be sprayed with detenoline so that it would have the smell of disinfection — which was then done.

Your second task — still much more important — is to adapt our gas chambers, which function at the moment with the exhaust gases of a Diesel, to something better and more rapid. I am thinking above all of prussic acid. The Führer and Himmler were here the day before yesterday. In accordance with their instructions, I must take you there personally. I must not deliver passes or entry permits to anyone.

Thereupon, Pfannenstiel asked: What then did the *Führer* say? Glob.: More quickly! to carry out the whole operation more quickly! the ministerial counsellor, Dr. Herbert Lindner, who accompanied him then asked: Do you believe, Herr Globocnek, that it is well-done and judicious to bury all these cadavers instead of burning them? After us could come a generation who will not understand all that! Globocnek replied: Gentlemen, if ever after us must come a generation so feeble and soft that it does not understand our great mission, then all the national socialism will have been in vain. On the contrary, I am of the opinion that we should put down plaques of bronze commemorating that it is us, we, who have had the courage to accomplish this great work so necessary. Then the *Führer*: Good, Globocnek, that is

my opinion too.

Afterwards, it was the other opinion which was imposed. The cadavers were burned on large grills improvised with railway rails, with the help of petrol and diesel oil.

T III — Half pages 9 (and), 10 and 11 (beginning)

The next day, we left for Belcec. For this purpose a special little station had been constructed close to a hill directly to the north of the route Lublin–Lemberg in the left corner of the demarcation line. To the south of the route some houses carrying the inscription “Special Detachment of the Waffen-SS at Belcec.” The actual head of all the murderous installations, Captain of Police Wirth, not yet being there, Globocnek introduced me to SS-Hauptsturmführer Obermeyer (of Pirmasens). This latter let me see that afternoon only what he absolutely had to show me. I did not see any dead that day, only the smell which prevailed in the surroundings was pestilential in that scorching month of August and there were flies everywhere by the million. Just the little station of two lines, there was a large hut, the so-called “Cloakroom,” with a large service window “Valuables.” Then came a room with a hundred chairs; the premises of the hairdresser. Then a little alley in the open air planted with birch trees, bordered to the right and left with a double row of barbed wire, with the signs: Access to the inhalation rooms and baths! Before us, a kind of bath establishment, with to right and left in the front large concrete pots with geraniums, then a small stairway and afterwards to right and to left respectively 3 halls of 5 x 5 meters, 1.90 m high, with doors of wood like garages. In the wall at the bottom, not very visible in the darkness, large sliding doors of wood. On the roof, by way of a “subtle joke,” the star of David! In front of the building a sign: Heckenholt Foundation. I did not see more on that afternoon.

The following morning, a little before 7 o’clock, I am told: the first transport arrives in ten minutes! Actually, at the end of some minutes, the first train coming from Lemberg arrives: 45 cars, 6,700 persons of whom 1,450 were already dead on their arrival. Behind the barred openings, terribly pale and frightened, children were looking outside, their eyes full of the anguish of death, as well as the men and women. The train entered the station: 200 Ukrainians brutally open the doors and make the people go out of the cars by lashing them with their whips of leather thongs. A big loudspeaker gives further instructions: to undress completely: also remove artificial limbs, spectacles, etc. . . . Deliver objects of value to the service window, without vouchers or receipts. Carefully tie up the shoes in pairs (in view of the collection of textiles), otherwise, in the pile which rose easily to 25 meters in

height, no one would have been able to retrieve the shoes which went together. Then the women and the young girls pass to the hairdresser who, in two or three cuts with the scissors, cuts all the hair, so to have it disappear into large potato sacks. "This is intended for some special purpose or other, for the submarines, for the caulking or something like that," the SS-Unterscharführer who is on duty at this place tells me.

T III — Half pages 11 (end), 12 and 13 (beginning)

Then the procession starts to move. At the head, a very pretty young girl, they follow the road, all naked, men, women, children, without artificial limbs. I am standing above, on the ramp, between the chambers, with Captain Wirth. Mothers with nursing babies at the breast: they go up, hesitate enter in to the death chambers. In a corner is standing a man of the SS unit, corpulent, who says in an unctuous voice to these unfortunates: Not the least thing will happen to you! It will be necessary only to breathe deeply in the chambers, this develops the lungs, this inhalation is necessary because of the sicknesses and the epidemics. To those who ask what might become of them he replies: Yes, naturally, the men will have to work, to build houses or make roads, but the women will not have need to work. Only if they wish, they can help with the housework or in the kitchen. For some of these unfortunates a little glimmer of hope which suffices to make them walk without resistance the few steps which lead them to the chambers. The majority know what to prepare themselves for, the smell tells them their fate! They climb up the little stairway and then they see everything. The mothers with their children at the breast, the small naked children, the adults, men and women, all naked, they hesitate but they enter into the chambers of death pushed forward by others who are behind them or by the whips of leather thongs of the SS men. The majority without saying a word. A Jewess of about 40 years, with eyes full of flame, calls for the blood shed here to fall again on the murderers. She receives 5 or 6 blows of the horsewhip in the face from Captain Wirth personally, then she too disappears into the chamber. Many pray. I pray with them. I squeeze myself into a corner and I cry in a loud voice to my God and theirs. How I would have loved to go into the chambers with them, how I would have loved to die their death. They would then have found an SS officer in uniform in their chambers. They would have interpreted and treated the affair as an accident and it would have been quietly shelved. But I still do not have the right to do it; I must first reveal what I see here! The chambers are filled. Pack tightly! Captain Wirth has ordered. The people are stepping on each other's feet, 700–800 on 25 square meters, in 45

cubic meters. The SS men press them physically one against the other as much as they can. The doors close.

T III — Halfpages 13 (end) and 14 (beginning)

During this time, the others are waiting outside in the open air, naked. Someone says to me: even in winter it is exactly like this! Yes, but they can catch their death, I say. But that's exactly what they are here for! a man of the SS troop retorts in his dialect. Now, I also understand at least why the installation is called "Heckenholt foundation." Heckenholt is the operator of the Diesel engine, a little technician, at the same time the constructor of the installation. The people must be put to death by the exhaust gases of the Diesel. But the Diesel does not work! Captain Wirth arrives. One sees that it is painful to him that it should have to happen today just when I am here. Yes, I see everything and I wait. My stopwatch has recorded everything very well. 50 minutes, 70 minutes, the diesel does not start. The people wait in their gas chambers. In vain. One hears them weep, sob. "Like at the synagogue," remarks the professor Pfannenstiel, his ear against the wooden door. Captain Wirth beats the Ukrainian who has to help Unterscharführer Heckenholt get the Diesel going 12 or 13 times on the face with his horsewhip. At the end of 2 hours 49 minutes — the stopwatch has recorded everything — the Diesel starts. Up to that moment, the people remain alive in these 4 chambers, 4 times 750 persons in 4 times 45 cubic meters. Once more, 25 minutes pass. Correct,¹² many are now dead, one sees it through the small window in which the electric light illuminates the chamber for an instant. At the end of 28 minutes only some still live; at the end of 32 minutes everyone is dead. From the other side the men of the work detail open the wooden doors. They have been promised for their dreadful work — even the Jews — liberty and so much per thousand of all the valuables found.

T III — Half pages 14 (end), 15 and 16 (beginning)

The dead are standing straight like pillars of basalt, ranged tightly one against the other in the chambers. There would not be place to fall or lean forward. Even in death one recognizes the families. They still hold hands, clenched in death, so that there is difficulty separating them to free the chambers ready for the next load. The bodies are thrown outside, damp with sweat and urine, dirtied with excrement and with menstrual blood on the legs. The cadavers of children fly through the air. There is no time. The horsewhips of the Ukrainians whistle on the work detail. Two dozen dentists open the mouths with

hooks and look to see if there are gold crowns. Gold to the left, without gold to the right. Other dentists break the gold teeth and crowns with the aid of pincers and hammers to pull them out of the jaws.

In the middle of all these people, Captain Wirth leaps everywhere. He is in his element. Some workers check the genital organs and anus in the search for gold, brilliants and precious objects. Wirth calls me beside him: "Just feel the weight of this fruit tin with the gold teeth. This is only from yesterday and the day before." He says to me in language incredibly common and incorrect: "You would not believe the quantities of gold and of brilliants—he pronounced the word with two L's — and dollars. But see for yourself." And he took me to a jeweler whose job it was to look after all these treasures, and he showed me everything. Then again I was shown a former manager of the "*Kaufhaus des Westens*" of Berlin and a violinist. "This is a Captain of the old imperial and royal army of Austria, knight of the Iron Cross 1st. class, who is now the senior of the Jewish work detail in the camp." The naked cadavers were hauled on wooden barrows to only a few meters from there to pits of 100 by 20 by 12 meters. At the end of some days, the cadavers started to swell, then sank down tight together shortly afterwards, in such a way that it was possible to throw a new layer on top of them. Then 10 cm of sand was spread on top so that there only emerged some isolated heads and arms. At one of these places I saw Jews scrambling around on the cadavers and working in the graves. I am told that, by mistake, the people of a convoy who arrived already dead had not been unclothed. Naturally it was necessary to salvage that because of the textiles and the precious objects which, without that being done, they would have carried to the grave.

T III — Half pages 16 (end) and 17 (beginning)

Neither at Belzec nor at Treblinka was the least trouble taken to record or count those who were killed. The numbers were only estimates made according to the content of the cars. Over and above the Jews coming from all the sovereign states, above all the Czechs and the Poles No. III were killed in the gaschambers. Commissions of SS men — some of them without even a full primary school education — went from village to village in fine limousines and with medical equipment, in white coats, making the population march by in front of them, making a show of examining them, and designating those who were alleged to be without biological value and should for this reason be killed, principally the old, the consumptives, and the sick. Yes, a *Sturmbannführer* of the SS told me, without these measures, Poland, overpopulated, would be for us devoid of all value. We are only carrying out after the event that which nature looks after for herself in

the animal and vegetable kingdoms, and unfortunately omits to do with mankind. Captain Wirth begged me not to propose to Berlin to change the installations and to leave everything just as it was, a good setup that was perfectly run in and had proven itself. As for the prussic acid, I had it buried under my supervision while giving as a reason that it had begun to decompose.

T III — Half pages 17 (end) and 18 (beginning)

The next day, 19 August 1942, we went in Captain Wirth's auto to Treblinka, 120 km to the north-northeast of Warsaw. The installation was almost the same, but quite a bit larger than at Belzec. Eight gas chambers and veritable mountains of suitcases, of textiles, and underwear. A banquet was given in our honor in the style of "old Germany" in the common hall, typically Himmlerian. The meal was simple, but one could have all that one wished. Himmler himself had ordered that the men of these commands should have as much meat, butter, and other things, notably alcohol, as they wished. Professor Pfannenstiel made a speech in which he explained to the men the usefulness of their task and the importance of their great mission. Talking to me, he spoke of the "very humane methods" and of the beauty of the work. I guarantee that he really said this incredible thing to me. He said in particular to the teams: When one sees the bodies of Jews, one then understands truly how much your task is worthy of recognition. When we took leave, we were offered again several kilos of butter and many liqueurs to take away. I had difficulty in making them believe that I had sufficient of all that from my so-called estate, whereupon Pfannenstiel, entirely happy, grabbed my share. We then left by car for Warsaw. It was there, while I was vainly trying to obtain a bunk in the train, I met the secretary of the legation of Sweden in Berlin, Baron von Otter. Still under the very fresh impression of the terrible things I had seen, I told him everything, while begging him to make this known immediately to his government and to the allies, considering that each day of delay must cost the lives of thousands and dozens of thousands of other people. He asked me to give him a reference and in this respect I named Herr Superintendent-*General*, Doctor Otto Dibelius, Berlin, Brüderweg 2, Lichterfelde West, close friend of Pastor Martin Niemöller and a member of the ecclesiastical resistance against Nazism. I met Herr von Otter twice more in the Swedish legation. He had meantime made a report to Stockholm and stated to me that this report had had a considerable influence on German-Swedish relations.

T III — Half pages 18 (end) and 19 (beginning)

I tried to make a report of the same matter to the apostolic nuncio. It was there that I was asked whether I was a soldier. Following which, they refused to have all further conversation with me and I was invited to leave the embassy of His Holiness. On leaving the embassy of the Holy See, I was pursued by a policeman on a bicycle who passed quickly in front of me, put his foot on the ground and let me then pass, in a totally incomprehensible way. After that I recounted the foregoing to hundreds of important persons, among others to the secretary of the Catholic bishop of Berlin, Herr Doctor Winter, begging him expressly to transmit my information to the Apostolic See.

T III — Half pages 19 (end), 20 and 21 (beginning)

I must still add that SS-Sturmbannführer Günther of the Principal Security Office of the Reich — I believe he is the son of the “Rassen” Günther¹³ — demanded again from me at the beginning of 1944 very large quantities of prussic acid for a very obscure purpose. He showed me in the Kurfürstenstrasse, in Berlin, a shed in which he was thinking of stocking the prussic acid. I then declared to him that it was out of the question that I take the responsibility. It was a matter of several freight cars, enough to put to death millions of human beings. He said to me that he did not know yet himself whether the poison would be used, nor when, for whom, by what method, etc. But it was to be held available at all times. Afterwards I was often unable to put Goebbels’ words out of my mind. I suppose they wanted to kill a large part of the German people, including surely the clergy and the unpopular officers. This would have to have been done in places such as lecture halls or clubs, or at least that is what I could deduce from the questions relating to execution techniques that Günther asked me. It is possible also that he would have had to kill foreign workers or prisoners of war — I do not know — in any case I made arrangements so that the prussic acid would disappear, serving for no matter what disinfection purposes as soon as it had arrived in the camps of Oranienburg and Auschwitz. This was dangerous for me, but I would simply have been able to say that the poison was already in a dangerous state of decomposition. I am sure that Günther wanted to obtain the poison to put to death eventually millions of human beings. There was enough of it for 8 million persons, 8,500 kg. I have submitted the invoices for 2,175 kg. I always had the invoices written in my name, pretending that this was for reasons of secrecy, but actually in order to be more free to dispose of the poison as I intended to get rid of it. Above all I avoided bringing the matter constantly to mind by presenting the invoices, but left the invoices totally unpaid, while asking the firm to be patient.

The manager of DEGESCH, Doctor Peters, Frankfurt a.M. and

Friedberg, who made this delivery, told me that he has delivered prussic acid in ampoules intended to kill human beings.

T III — Halfpages 21 (end) and 22 (beginning)

Another time, Günther asked me whether it was possible to kill in the open air, in the moats of the fortress of Theresienstadt, the Jews who had permission to walk there. To thwart this terrible plan, I stated that it was impossible. I then afterwards learned that the SD-Commando Theresienstadt had obtained prussic acid another way and killed the Jews. The most horrible concentration camps moreover were not Oranienburg or Belsen or Dachau, but Auschwitz, where millions of people have been killed, part in the gas chambers, part in what were called the "death caves"; and Mauthausen-Gusen near Linz. At Auschwitz, it was customary to kill children by holding pads soaked in prussic acid under the nose. —Furthermore, I have myself seen at the Ravensbrück camp, near Furstenburg in Mecklenburg, the concentration camp for women, experiments made on the living. These were made on the initiative of SS-Gruppenführer Dr. Gebhardt-Hohenlychen, by SS-Hauptsturmführer Dr. Gundlach. At Buchenwald as well such experiments on living human beings were made, for example, with up to 100 Pervitin tablets or, failing that, until death occurred. Himmler himself reserved the right of approval for these experiments. In particular, it was down there that the vaccine against typhus, lymph and other serums was tested. The experiments were made each time on 100 to 200 persons, namely people condemned to death by the camp management or by the SD. I was astonished at Oranienburg that in just a few days all the homosexuals disappeared by hundreds, and this in the ovens.

T III — Half pages 22 (end) and 23

I furthermore avoided making too frequent appearances in the camps, because sometimes they had the habit of hanging people or proceeding with executions in honor of visitors. The SS-Hauptsturmführer Dr. Fritz Krantz, who has seen great numbers of such things, often spoke to me in profound indignation. For example, at Gusen-Mauthausen, every day numerous Jews who had to work in a large quarry were pushed, to make them fall to the bottom of the steep cliff; and, down below, their cases were recorded as fatal accidents. At Auschwitz, such shameful actions were similarly perpetrated in much greater numbers than at Belzen. I had the luck in my service to meet some total anti-Nazis, like the SS-Hauptsturmführer and chief of staff, Heinrich Holländer, a good Catholic, and Dr. Fritz Krantz, whom I just

previously mentioned. Holländer kept me informed of all the interesting things. His wife one day, on the occasion of a meal, made violent reproaches on the subject of the homicide committed against the Jews to Dr. Grawitz, SS-Obergruppenführer, of the Reich SS and Police medical service and, moreover President of the German Red Cross. As a consequence of this, she was severely reprimanded and forbidden ever to mention that subject again.

All the information I am supplying is the literal truth, absolutely accurate. I am fully aware, before God and all humanity, of the extraordinary import of the information which I am noting here in writing and I affirm under oath that nothing at all of what I have recorded is imagined or invented, but on the contrary everything happened exactly as I have said.

T III — Supplement No 1

At Belzec, I had the impression that all were really dead although Captain Wirth had told me that they had seen the most unexpected things, for example, that they had found a child fully alive, in the morning, in a chamber which had been left full all night without emptying it. Notably, Wirth said, they had seen the most curious things and the most diverse reactions among the mentally ill.

The experimentation with different kinds of homicide must not have been extended to a great number. But more than one thing was tried. For example — undoubtedly on a fairly large number of people — death by compressed air in the old boilers into which the air was introduced from compressors of the type ordinarily used to break up asphalt. At Treblinka, I had the impression that many were still living. Nearly all had their eyes open and for this reason had a frightful appearance. However, I saw no more movement even though I paid great attention. The medical doctor Villing, of Dortmund, told me with very profound emotion the account of a truly heroic death. It concerned thousands of Polish ecclesiastics who had to dig the ditches themselves in front of which they were subsequently shot, naked.

T III — Supplement No 2

When they were asked with mocking contempt if they still believed in Christ and Mary, they replied by firmly confessing their faith in Christ and invoked the Virgin of Czestochowa. This death had been gripping and convincing, Doctor Villing tells me. Other intellectuals also — notably teachers, men and women, died in the hundreds of thousands with similar exemplary dignity. A kind of death which was told me under every assurance of truth consisted of making people

climb the stairway which led to a blast furnace, to finish them off once at the top, and to make them disappear afterwards into the blast furnace. Plenty of people must have been killed likewise in the brick kilns. But the source from which I have this fact is not sufficiently worthy of belief.

A high-ranking officer of the Police of Bromberg, the SS-Obersturmführer Haller, recounted, to me and the doctors in the course for the SS, that before his arrival at Bromberg it was usual to kill Jewish children without further ado by simply bashing their heads against the walls of houses. He put a stop to these stupidities and saw to it that execution by firearms was implemented.

T III — Supplement No 3

He has the particularly tragic memory of two little girls who had knelt down before them to say their prayers — they were 5 and 8 years of age — and who “had” to be shot however all the same. Hall[er] says moreover: at the mass executions of the Poles, they were forced to dig long ditches and to lie in them face down. Then they were executed from above with a machine gun. The following ones then had to lie down on the cadavers which were still warm, to be executed similarly. Many were still not dead, and when they tried to get out of the ditch by crawling under 5 or 6 layers [of bodies], it was necessary to finish them off at the edge of the ditch.

An important member of the German government of Krakau told me, while carving a turkey, of an especially fortunate capture they made. According to him, they had taken a leading member of the Polish resistance movement, a Jew. This one, during his interrogation, cloaked himself in silence. Upon which his wrists were broken. Even then he continued to be silent. Then he was seated by force on the plate of a stove, red-hot from the fire. You should just have seen how the fellow became talkative!

T III — Supplements No 4 and No 5 (first five lines)

During a visit to the local office of the construction department of the Waffen-SS of Lublin, on 18 August 1942, two heads of the special works told me of an inspection made in the morning at the morgue of the prisoners of war camp of the SS near Lublin. The cadavers there had been crammed in by the thousands. While they were taking measurements for an alteration of the premises, two men had suddenly moved. The SS-Rottenführer who was accompanying them had then asked: Where then? Then he had taken an iron bar which he found at hand and he had smashed the skulls of the two men. It was not the

action, the heads of the works thought, which had surprised them, but the natural way in which it had happened.

The day of my inspection at Belzec, it happened that a Jewess made some cuts in the neck to some Jews of the work detail with a razor that she had kept hidden on her person. Wirth deeply regretted that the woman was already dead, she should have had to suffer some exemplary punishment. As for the Jews of the work detail who were wounded, he had them looked after attentively and receive medical treatment, as he said, in order to keep them believing that they would be resettled, remunerated, and kept alive. He — Wirth — found an inexhaustible source of astonishment and amusement in the fact that they believed it. And the fellows believe that, the fellows believe it!!! he exclaimed to himself!!

T III — Supplement No 5 (end) plus the first four lines of supplement No 6

At Belcec, the men and young boys were invited by loudspeaker, after the opening of the cars and the undressing, to fetch the clothes scattered everywhere straight away into the cars and with which they disappeared into a big warehouse. “Whoever does the most can stay in the work detail!!” Then began a race to the death between these naked people at the time of tidying up, under the sarcastic laughter of the men of the troop. Naturally, they all disappeared afterwards into the gas chambers. Only a few very old and very weak persons were set apart, and then shot. I think of some impressions profoundly moving for me: of a little Jewish boy of 3 or 4 years who had a packet of strings for tying up the shoes by pairs put into his hand; of the way that, lost in a dream, he distributed the strings to the people; — or again, of a little coral chain which a little girl lost one meter from the entrance to the gas chamber. I recall that a little boy of perhaps three bent down to pick it up, what pleasure it gave him, and that he was afterwards pushed — no, in that instance he is gently urged — to make him go into the gas chamber.

T III — Supplement No 6 excepting the last 3 lines

The SS-Hauptsturmführer Obermeyer told me: I met in a village of the region a Jew and his wife, natives of my home town of Pirmasens. The man was a Wachtmeister during the World War and he is a very good fellow.¹⁴ When I was a child he saved me from death by preventing me from being run over. I am going to take them with me now and I shall enroll them in the work detail. As I asked him what would happen to those two, Obermeyer says: Afterwards, it will be as

for the others, we must have no illusions. There is only one possibility. But, at least, I shall have them shot. I have similarly met a fairly large number of people within the SS who condemned these methods most severely and who, because of this, came to a rejection of or even a passionate hatred of National Socialism.

T III — Supplement No 6 (the last 3 lines), Supplement No 7 (in full), Supplement No 8 (in full, that is 5 lines)

I quote here some names which I answer for completely:

— SS-Sturmbannführer, Doctor of Medicine Focht of Hagen in Westphalia, head of the internal section of the SS quarantine hospital of Berlin,

— SS-Hauptsturmführer, Doctor of Medicine Nissen, Itzehoe,

— SS-Obersturmführer, Dr. Med.e Sorge of Jena,

— SS-Hauptscharführer, Staff Sergeant of the Reich SS medical corps, Heinrich Holländer, anti-Nazi activist and animated by a burning hatred of Nazism.

— Hauptsturmführer Dr. Fritz Krantz, head of the medical section in the Reich SS,

— SS-Gruppenführer, Doctor of Pharmacy, Blumenreuther, director in chief of sanitary supplies of the Reich SS Medical Department and of the Police,

— Dr. Rudolphi, SS-Sturmbannführer, same address,

— Dr. Behmenburg, same address. Rudolphi trampled the portrait of Hitler with his feet in October 1944

In general, it is a mistake to look on the SS, even in the slightest, as a united mass. I know how difficult it is concerning this to make any distinctions between judgement and treatment. I understand that one might wish to find fault with a given unit in particular and I am without doubt the one who best knows the horrors committed by the SS. Nevertheless, we must not lose sight of the fact that, for example, at least two-thirds of the Dutch SS were forcibly enlisted by lying methods and so-called sports courses. It was just the same with many Germans, notably those who came from the Hitler Youth and who were surprised and duped without suspecting a thing. Those as well who, at the instigation of Himmler, were all simply pushed to leave the air force or the navy to enter the SS. That has to be taken into account for the love of truth and justice!

Text T IV

It is handwritten, composed in French, dated 6 May 1945. The original, forwarded to LKA by Elfriede Gerstein on 10 August 1972,

in preserved there; it is document 33.

It consists of 9 half pages.

Along with document 33, Gerstein's widow forwarded to LKA nine other original half pages entitled "Supplements." This is document 34, which LKA presents as additions to document 33.

T IV — Half pages 4, 5, and 6 (in full)

. . . Hearing of the massacres of imbeciles and the insane at Grafeneck, Hadamar, etc., shocked and wounded in my insides, I had only one wish: To see, to look into all this machinery and then cry out to all the people. I did not have for this undertaking any great scruples having been myself twice the victim of agents of the SD who had crept into the most secret counsel of the Brothers of the confessional resistance church (Niemoeller) and even in the prayer circle. In addition, a sister-in-law — Mlle. Bertha Ebeling — was murdered at Hadamar. Supplied with two references from employees of the Gestapo, who handled my case, it was not difficult to enter the SS army. The employees were of the opinion that my idealism, which they admired, should work for the benefit of Nazism. — On 10 March 1941, I entered into the SS. The elementary instruction was done with 40 doctors at Hamburg-Langenhorn, at Arnhem/Holland and at Oranienburg. In Holland, I straightway made contact with the national Dutch resistance (Graduate Engineer Ubbink of Doesburg). — For my double studies I soon succeeded to the medico-technical service of the SS-Führungshauptamt — Group D — sanitary service of the SS army, hygiene section. In this service, it was up to me to choose my duties for myself with great freedom. I constructed lorries and installations for disinfection, and filters for the troops' drinking water, prison camps and concentration camps.

For an exact knowledge of this industry, I soon succeeded at it, my predecessors not being successful. In this way, it was possible to reduce the number of dead prisoners considerably. Undeservedly soon, I had great success and was taken for a great technical genius. In this way, I was often consulted on behalf of the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of the East. At least, I succeeded in lowering somewhat the great outbreak of purpura fever of 1941 in the prisoners' camps, etc. For my successes, soon I was lieutenant. December 1941, the tribunal which had ordered my expulsion out of the NSDAP received knowledge of my entry into the SS army. Great efforts were made to hunt and pursue me. But because of my great successes and my honorable character I was retained and protected by my chief. January 1942, I was named head of the service of the department of technical sanitation, containing also the service of severely toxic gases

for disinfection.

T IV – Half pages 7, 8 and 9 (the first two lines)

On 8 June 1942, the SS Sturmbannführer Günther of the Reichs Sicherheits Hauptamt, entered into my place of work in civilian clothes, unknown to me. He gave me the order to obtain at once 260 kg of prussic acid for an extremely secret purpose and to go with the poison by means of an auto to a place which was only known to the driver. Some weeks later we set off for Collin near Prague. I was able to get an idea about what kind of order it was. But I accepted it, because, by chance, I succeeded in seeing into all this machinery. Moreover, as an expert for prussic acid, I was sufficiently authorised and competent in any case to get rid of the poison as decomposed and thus prevent its misuse for killing people.

We were accompanied — by chance — by SS Obersturmbannführer Professor Dr. med. Pfannenstiel, professor of hygiene at the University Marburg/Lahn. — At Collin I was given to understand that the acid was intended to kill people. Because of that, in the afternoon the car was observed with attention.

At Lublin we were received by the SS *Gruppenführer* Globocnek, who says to us: All this affair is one of the most secret things, and even the most secret. Anyone who speaks about it will be shot immediately. Yesterday, two talkers died. Then he explained to us: At the moment — 17 August 1942 — there are 3 installations:

1 **Belcec**, on the highway Lublin–Lemberg in the sector of the Russian demarcation line. Maximum per day 15,000 persons.

2 **Sobibor**, (in Poland; I do not know exactly where). 20,000 per day. Not seen!

3 **Tréblinca**, 120 km NNE of Warsaw. 25,000 per day. Seen!

4 **Maidandek** (near Lublin) seen in preparation.

I inspected Belcec, Tréblinca, Maidenak in detail with the head of these institutions, the captain of police Wirth.

T IV – Half page 9 (continuation and end)

Globocnek says: You must do the disinfection of very large quantities of textiles, linen, clothing, ten or twenty times the result of “Spinnstoff Sammlung.” All this collection is only made to conceal the origin of Jewish clothes, Polish, Czech, etc. Truly, the result of our installations is 10–20 times that of all these collections!

T IV – Supplement – Half page 1 and half page 2 (beginning)

At Belcec, I had the impression that all were dead. But the Hauptmann Wirth who — with no knowledge of chemistry, physiology, and moreover no intellectual culture whatsoever had a liking for experiments in killing men — told me the most curious things that he has seen: for example, a very lively child in a chamber which had stayed full during the night. In preference, they had made the most different experiments with the insane. I do not believe that it concerns large numbers, with whom the experiments were made. For example, men were killed by means of compressed air in boilers, making use of the ordinary compressors for road asphalt. — At Treblinca, I had the impression that some were still living. Nearly all had their eyes open, a terrible look. But I did not see any movements, in spite of every attention.

The SS Hauptsturmführer Dr. Villing of Dortmund told me, touched and gripped in his heart, of the most heroic manner of dying. It concerned several thousands of Polish curés and priests, forced to dig the ditches themselves and who, in front of these ditches, were shot completely naked.

T IV – Supplement – Half pages 2 and 3 (except the last 4 words)

Asked with irony if they still believed in Jesus Christ and Mary they replied by a strong confession of Jesus Christ and by an appeal to the Holy Virgin of Czestochowa. This manner of dying — Doctor Villing tells me — was moving and touching.

Also other Polish intellectuals, above all the schoolteachers, both men and women, died in large numbers in a manner extraordinarily honest and moving.

One way of killing men was to make them ascend the stairway of a blast furnace, kill them there with a rifle shot and have them disappear into the furnace. They say that many men died in the round furnaces of the brickyards. But I cannot guarantee the truth of that report.

One of the heads of the Bromberg police, SS Obersturmbannführer Haller, told 40 doctors in my course and me that, before his arrival at Bromberg, it was usual to bang the Jewish children by the head against the wall. He personally ended this abuse and had these children shot.

T IV – Supplement – Half pages 3 (last 4 words), 4 (in full) and 5 (beginning)

He tragically recalled two little girls of 5 and 8 years, who had fallen to their knees to say their prayers — and who had to be shot afterwards.

—Haller told us: At the massacres of the Poles they were forced to dig large ditches in which they had to place themselves face down. Then they were machine-gunned with automatic pistols. The next ones were made to place themselves on the still warm cadavers in order to be shot immediately. Many were not dead and were shot trying to crawl out from the 5–6 layers of men.

One of the heads of the German government at Cracow has told me, while carving a turkey, of an extraordinarily lucky break. That they had seized one of the chiefs of the Polish resistance, a Jew. At the interrogation he kept silent. Then they broke his wrists.

But still he kept silent. They they put him with his behind on the hot-plate of a stove. Then, he was ready to talk!

T IV – Supplement – Half pages 5 (continuation and end) and 6 (in full)

On the occasion of a visit to the administration of the construction works of the SS Army, on 18 August 1942, these two officer architects told us of a visit to a mortuary depot of a prisoners' camp near Lublin. The cadavers were piled up by the thousands. While busy with their work, all of a sudden they saw some who were moving. The SS Rottenführer of the service only asked: Where? ...then he took an iron bar that was already at hand to break their skulls. — It was not the action — the architects told me — which surprised them, but that it all happened as a matter of course.

On the occasion of my visit to Belcec, a Jewess wounded with a razor some men of the work detail. Wirth regretted she was already dead, for not being able to punish her severely as an example. He had the wounded Jews looked after by doctors with great care, to make them believe that they would be spared and recompensed. In a loud voice he laughed that they believed they would live, that they would receive their acres, their promises. The fools, the fools, he cried!

T IV – Supplement – Half page 7 (except the last 3 words)

At Belcec and at Tréblinca, after undressing, the men and the boys were invited to carry at great speed the clothes scattered everywhere to the cars: The best workers will be members of the work force! — It made a competition of life and death of these naked men picking up the clothes, the SS deriding them. Naturally, afterwards, all disappeared into the gas chambers, only some very old and very weak persons were shot. — I remember some gripping impressions: of the little Jewish boy, who was ordered to give a small piece of string to every person to tie the shoes together, and who, dreaming, distributed

the strings. That all — involuntarily — were involved in the machinery of their own killing. — Or I remember a naked little girl of 5 years who, one meter from the death chamber, loses a little string of corals, and the little boy of three years, who picks it up, who is very happy with it — and then was thrown into the chamber.

T IV – Supplement – Half page 8 (except the last 5 lines)

The SS *Hauptsturmführer* Obermeyer told me: I met in a village of this region a Jew and his wife from my native place Pirmasens. 1914–1918, he was a sergeant, an honorable man. As a child, he saved me from death, from being run over. I shall take these people and make them members of the work detail. — Asked, what will be their future lot, he says to me: Afterwards? The same as the others, in such things there are no differences. But I shall have them shot! Even on the inside of the SS I have met some number of men warmly condemning these methods, full of a burning hatred against Nazism.

T IV – Supplement – Half pages 8 (end) and 9 (in full)

Here are some names of such men:

$\frac{2}{3}$ of the Dutch SS were only in this unit because forced by the most fraudulent and violent methods. Similarly, many Germans, in preference from the Hitler Youth, were pressed into the SS by lie and deceptions. It is the same fate as those members of the Luftwaffe and navy, forced to the SS by Himmler. For justice, it is necessary not to forget this!

Text T V

It is typewritten, composed in French, dated 6 May 1945.

It is entitled “Report of Dr. Gerstein of Tübingen.” This is the copy of an interrogation by the services of the O.R.C.G. (Organisation for the Investigation of War Criminals). A specimen of this copy is preserved at the Directorate of Military Justice at Paris in the administrative file No. 611/War Crimes, reference Kurt Gerstein.

Not having been permitted to make photocopies of this interrogation, which we designate T Va, we shall present as appendix the photocopy of a document very close to it which comes from the National Archives at Washington and carries the declassification code 01.0813. It is, obviously, the replica of the document preserved at Paris with slight differences which we have corrected in the transcription. We designate the latter document T Vb.

There also exists a translation into English of T Vb. We designate this document T Vc. This document in English is also preserved in the National Archives in Washington; it carries the same declassification endorsement 01.0813 as T Vb. We have available a photocopy, coming from the Center for Contemporary Jewish Documentation at Paris; but it is a document in such poor condition that certain passages are illegible. In the circumstances, we forego adding the version T Vc as an appendix to this thesis.

Transcription of T Va (first sheet)

. . . when I learned of the massive murder of the insane at Hadamar, Grafeneck and elsewhere, I had only one wish, to see right to the bottom of this sorcerers' pot and to communicate to the people what I shall see there, be it at the risk of my life. I did not have to have scruples, having been myself twice the victim of the agents of the SS who had infiltrated themselves into the most closed groups of the Protestant Church and who had prayed side by side with me.

I thought: "Whatever you are capable of doing, I can do better than you," and I constituted myself a volunteer to enter into the SS. I made this decision all the more easily in that my sister-in-law, Bertha Ebeling, had been killed at Hadamar.

With the help of two recommendations of Gestapo agents who had been responsible for my case, it was easy for me to be accepted into the Waffen SS; one of these gentlemen had said to me: "With your share of idealism, you should be in the party, right up to your neck." In this way they themselves showed me the road to take. My basic training was given to me at Hamburg-Langenhorn in a course of instruction which I followed with 40 doctors. Afterwards at Arnhem in Holland and at Oranienburg. At Arnhem, I was immediately put in touch with the Dutch resistance by my student friend, the manufacturer Ubbink, of Doesburg.

My double studies, as much doctor as technician, bring me soon to the G.S. of the SS, Section D. Hygiene. It must be admitted that this section was of a remarkable breadth of conception, perfectly conscientious. The choice of my occupation was left to me entirely and freely. I set myself to construct disinfection installations stationary and mobile for prisoners' camps, concentration camps, troops under combat, in large quantity and to satisfy a pressing need. Without having personal merit in that, I obtain a great success and from this moment I am considered, wrongly, a technical genius. Quite simply I have solid good sense and a great sureness of instinct. From this moment, I am very much used for the projects of the Ministry of Labor and of the Ministry of the East, and I have to take charge of putting in

good order the very insufficient disinfection system of the O.K.W.¹⁶ (Oberkommando der Wehrmacht). This system was already so badly botched that there was not a great deal to improve. All the same, I succeeded in stopping the terrible wave of typhus of 1941 which daily caused several tens of thousands of deaths in the prisoners' and the concentration camps. Soon, I became second, then first lieutenant.

In December 1941, I am once more in great danger, the party tribunal that had decided my execution, having learned that I had infiltrated into an E. M. of the SS. Thanks to my successes and the general esteem which I enjoyed, I am protected by my chiefs and kept on.

In February 1942, I am named head of the technical sanitary section which comprises, at the same time, all the drinking water system and all the technical disinfection, even with the aid of very toxic gasses.

Transcription of T Va (second sheet)

On 8 June 1942, the SS Sturmbannfuehrer Guenther of the R.S.H.A. of the Kurfurstenstrasse comes into my office. He is in civilian clothes. I have never seen him before. With many mysterious allusions, he gives me the order to obtain for him 260 kgs of prussic acid and to go with this poison, with a car of the R.S.H.A. to a place known only to the driver.

Some time after, I go with this car to Kellin [Kollin] near Prague. I was able to imagine approximately the sort of mission it concerned. I accept it all the same, for today again it seems to me that a chance, looking strangely like fate, is putting me in a position to cast an eye exactly where I wanted to see clear with all the fibers of my heart. Among the thousands of possible posts, I had been entrusted, among hundreds of others, with just the post which brought me closest to that sort of thing and which charged me, me among so many others, to work there. If I think about it, that seems to me incredible, and all the more so if one takes my past into account which has led me several times into the prisons of the Gestapo and of the S.D. for anti-national activities and, not so long ago, into a concentration camp, this being largely known to my chiefs, following from the denunciation of the party. Truly, the S.D. and its patron the R.S.H.A. slept magnificently in this case and made in an exemplary fashion a gardener of the goat.¹⁷

At all times, when carrying out an order received, I keep the absolute secret of this mission, even in the office, and speak to no one of this thing. It is not very possible to doubt, that if in my situation I yield to an indiscretion, I will be killed after dreadful tortures and my family will be executed the same as me.

I have not the least scruple in accepting this mission, for others would have brought it to success in the spirit of the S.D., whereas I,

considered an authority in the field of prussic acid and of very toxic gases, I can very easily make the whole load disappear under the pretext that the material is spoiled or decomposed. It is in this way that the use of the prussic acid for the execution of human beings can be prevented. In any case, I do the necessary, from this moment onward, always to have on me for my personal use in case of need, some poison as well as a fully-loaded pistol which never leave me, either by day nor by night.

A place being free in the car in question, I am accompanied by the SS Obersturmbannfuehrer Professor Doctor Pfannenstiel, holder of the chair of hygiene at the University of Marburg Lahn.

Transcription of T Va (second sheet continued)

At Kollin in the prussic acid factory, I voluntarily made it clear to the personnel, by maladroit technical questions, that the prussic acid was intended to kill human beings. I did the same thing each time, this being the best way to start rumors among the people. The vehicle was very narrowly watched at Kollin.

At Lublin, we are received by the SS Gruppenfuehrer Globocnek, general of the Waffen SS. He says: This state secret is actually one of the most important, one can calmly say the most important; and any man who talks about it will be shot immediately; just yesterday, we silenced two talkers.

At the present time (17 August 1942) we have three installations:

Transcription of T Va (third sheet)

1. **Belcec**, situated on the route Lublin-Lemberg, in the northern corner just at the spot where the Russian demarcation line cuts the road.

Daily capacity: about 15,000 executions.

Average utilization: Up to by [sic] since April 42, 11,000 per day.

2. **Sobibor**, near Lublin in Poland, I do not know exactly where, 20,000 executions per day since about June 42

3. **Treblinca**, in Poland, 120 kms north-north-east of Varsavie. 25,000 executions per day since May 42

4. **Maidanneck**, near Lublin, still in preparation.

Accompanied by the head of all these death factories, the Captain of Police Wirth, I thoroughly inspected all these places with the exception of Maidanneck. Wirth is that same person charged by Hitler and Himmler with the mission that did away with the insane at Hadamar, Grafeneck, and elsewhere.

Transcription of T Va (fourth sheet)

Turning towards me, Globocnec says: "Your duty is to disinfect immense quantities of woollens, linens, clothes and shoes that our factories produce. If every year we collect clothes among the Danish people, that is only done to camouflage, *vis à vis* the people and the foreign workers, the origin of these immense quantities of secondhand clothes. Another much more important aspect of your mission is to modify the functioning itself of our installations of death. At present, that is done thanks to the exhaust gases of an old Russian diesel engine. This has to be modified and go very much faster. I think above all of the prussic acid. The day before yesterday the Fuehrer and Himmler were here. I received the order not to give passes to people who were obliged to visit these installations for indispensable reasons of work, but to accompany them personally in view of the preservation of the secret.

Pfannenstiel then asks: "What did the Fuehrer say about all this?" Reply of Globocnec: "All action must be taken more quickly. He was accompanied by the ministerial counsellor, Dr. Herbert Linden, of the ministry of the interior who was responsible, as doctor, for the execution of the insane. He expressed the idea to burn the cadavers rather than to bury them. It is possible that a generation may succeed us who will not understand us too well." Globocnec replied: Gentlemen, if ever a generation must succeed us that would not understand our great duty so necessary, it truly must be believed that all our national-socialism has been useless. On the contrary, I am of the opinion that we ought to put down at the same time as the cadavers, tablets of bronze on which it would be written that it was us who have had the courage to accomplish this work so important and so indispensable." Hitler replied: "Yes, Globocnec, that is also my opinion."

Nevertheless, some time after, it was the opinion of Dr. Linden which prevailed. Even the cadavers already buried were burned on grills made with rails, with the aid of petrol and heavy oils.

The offices of these factories were at Lublin in what is called the "*Julius Schreck*" barracks.¹⁸

I am introduced to the gentlemen present on the following day.

Transcription of T Va (fifth sheet)

We go in Captain Wirth's car to Belcec; a special little station is set up right beside the road, near a hill of yellow sand. To the south of the road are some buildings with the sign "Special *Commando* of the Waffen SS of Belcec."

Globocnec put me in contact with Wirth's replacement, the SS

Hauptsturmfuehrer Obermeyer of Pirmasens.

With remarkable restraint, the latter had me take a walk around the place.

Behind thick rows of barbed wire, all at once after the station, there is first a large hut with the inscription "Cloak Room" and further back a big service-window on which is marked: "Deposit of gold and objects of value." Then comes a room with about 100 stools, the "hairdressing salon." Then a pathway bordered by trees of about 150 m, bordered to right and left with double barbed wire with a sign "to the rooms for inhalations and baths." We then find ourselves in front of a building like a bathhouse with a little stairway of wrought iron. On the building, a large placard with the inscription "Heckenholt foundation." I did not see more that afternoon, only the gas chambers coming to the right of the corridor situated in the "bathhouse." To right and to left, three rooms like garages 5m x 5m and 1.90 m in height.

I do not see any dead that afternoon but everywhere, even on the road, there prevails an unbreathable stink, pestilential, indescribable, of cadaver. Millions of flies were flying in the air.

The next day some minutes before 7 o'clock, I am alerted "Immediately, the first transport is due to arrive." Actually, on the stroke of 7 o'clock, a train with 45 cars comes from Lemberg; behind the openings covered with barbed wire, one sees children of a dreadful pallor, as well as some men and some women with features distorted by fear.

200 Ukrainians heave open the doors and with their leather whips whip the people out of the cars. 6,700 persons, 1,450 of whom are already dead on their arrival. A loudspeaker gives instructions: "Undress completely, also take off your spectacles and artificial limbs (a guard says to a young girl: Leave your spectacles calmly, you will have others inside), deposit the objects of value at the service-window without voucher or receipt.

A little Jewish boy of three years receives an armful of strings which he pensively distributes to the others; it is for tying the shoes together, for never could anyone retrieve the assorted pairs in a pile 35 to 40 meters high. Then the women and the young girls pass on to the "hairdresser." With 2 or 3 cuts of the scissors the hair is cut and disappears into large potato sacks.

An Unterscharfuehrer of the service tells me "This is intended for a special use for the insulation of submarines."

Transcription of T Va (sixth sheet)

At this moment already, I predict to everybody that soon these submarines will stop prowling the sea, for the most efficient army

must lose its fighting spirit if it has been stained with rivers of innocent blood.

In fact, events proved me right a little time afterwards.

The procession of death then starts to move: at the head, a ravishing young girl. It descends the pathway. All naked, men, women, children; among them supported to the right and to the left, the men who have been obliged to put down their artificial limbs.

I find myself with Captain Wirth, at the top of the ramp between the death chambers. The mothers with their nursing babies at the breast, grandchildren naked, the adults, the children, the women, all in confusion, naked, they slowly mount. Then they enter into the death chambers, pushed by those who are behind them who are spurred on by the whips of the SS.

At a corner of the pathway there is a big SS man with a face like a bulldog who is surrounded by these unfortunates. In an unctuous voice he says to them: "Nothing at all will happen to you. You only have to breathe deeply inside the chambers, the inhalations are indispensable because of the epidemics and the sicknesses and that will do you good for the lungs." On the question "What is going to happen to us?" he relies: "*Ja*, naturally the men must work, to build houses, roads, but the women have no need to work, only if they wish, they can help in the factories and in the kitchen."

For some among these unfortunates, this glimmer of hope is sufficient to make them take steps just into the chambers without resistance, but the majority know what awaits them. The smell has informed them of their fate. Thus, they climb up the little stairway and see the whole installation. The majority without saying a word react like sheep being led to the slaughter house. A Jewess of about 40 years with blazing eyes, calls down on the head of the murderers all the innocent blood spilled here by the most dastardly killing ever seen. It is Captain Wirth personally who hits her 5 or 6 times with his whip on the face. She disappears in her turn into the chamber. Some turn towards me: "Oh, Mister, help us, help us!" Many pray. I cannot yet give them help. I pray with them, I press myself into a corner and I cry to their God and to my God in a loud voice.

Transcription of T Va (Sixth sheet)

I can permit myself this; there is enough noise around me. With what joy would I not have gone toward them into this chamber, with what joy would I not have died their death. On finding an SS officer in uniform in their chamber the murderers would never have supposed that that could be a protest on my part. They would have considered it an accident and my epitaph would have been: "Dead for his beloved

Fuehrer, while carrying out his important duty for the Fuehrer.”

No, that won't do. I do not yet have the right to yield to the temptation to die with these people. I know enough about it. Wirth has told me: “There are not ten persons who have seen what I have seen and who will see it; the auxiliary foreign personnel will be executed at the end. I am one of the five men who have seen all these installations. There is certainly not one of them, apart from me, who sees this as an adversary, as an enemy of this gang of murderers; so, I must still live to cry out what I have seen here. Truly, this must be much more difficult, I must live and make it known.

The chambers are filling up: “Pack tightly” Captain Wirth has ordered. They are stepping on one another's feet. From 700 to 800 human beings on 25 m², on 45 m³. I recapitulate, more than half are children, average weight maximum 30 kgs. Specific gravity 1, thus 25.250 kgs of men per chamber. Wirth is right, with the help of the SS, 750 persons can be stowed in 45 m³ and the SS help with their whips and cram in as many as physically possible. The doors close.

Transcription of T Va (seventh sheet)

During this time, the others are waiting outside naked. Meanwhile, the 2nd transport has arrived. Someone says to me: “Naturally they wait naked outside even in bad weather, even in winter.” Up until now I have not asked anything. I appeared to be interested in it, but a word stupidly escapes me. “They'll catch their death.” “That is what they are really there for,” an SS man says to me in his dialect. In a flash I understand also why all this installation is called “Hockelchoc Foundation.” Hockelchoc is the operator of the Diesel. A little technician and untiring worker according to Wirth, he already acquired undying merit at the time of the execution of the insane by his enthusiasm and his fertility of ideas. He is also the constructor of the whole installation; with the fumes of his Diesel, all these human beings must die. But the Diesel machine does not work. I am told this is quite rare.

Wirth arrives. One sees that it is painful to him that this should happen just today when I am here. Yes, I see everything and I hear everything; my watch has recorded everything well, 50 minutes, 70 minutes the Diesel does not start; humanity is waiting in these chambers in vain. One hears them weep and sob “like in the synagogue” remarks Professor Pfannenstiel who has his ear glued to the wooden door. Captain Wirth beats with a whip the Ukrainian who has to help Hockelchoc in starting the Diesel.

After 2 hours and 49 minutes, my stopwatch has recorded it, the Diesel starts. Right up to this moment, these human beings in the chambers already full are alive: 4 times 750 beings in 4 times 45

meter³.

Again 25 minutes pass. It is true that many are already dead; one sees that through the little window illuminating the chamber for an instant with electric light. Wirth has interviewed me in detail in order to know whether I consider it preferable to let these people die in a dark room or a lighted one. He asks this in the same tone that one asks: "Do you prefer to sleep with or without a cushion? Do you like your coffee with or without milk?"

28 minutes later, rare are those who still live. Finally, after 32 minutes all are dead; I am told that this is the normal time in order to kill.

On the other side, the men of the work detail open the sliding doors of wood. These men, also Jews, have been promised liberty and a certain percentage from all the objects of value found. Three book-keepers keep a book with scrupulous exactitude and calculate this percentage.

Transcription of T Va (eighth sheet)

Like marble statues, the dead stand pressed one against the other. In the chamber, there is no room to fall down or even to lean over. Even in death one can recognize the families; they hold hands together stiffened by death and it is difficult to pull them apart one from another to free the chambers for the next load.

The naked cadavers, damp with perspiration and urine, with menstrual blood on the legs, dirtied with excrements, are thrown outside, the bodies of babies fly through the air; there is no time to lose. The whips of the Ukrainians fall on the backs of the work detail. 2 dozen dentists open the mouths with hooks and look for gold. Gold to the right, no gold to the left. Other dentists with pincers and hammers pull out the gold teeth from the jaws. Captain Wirth skips about among all this, he is in his element. Some workers check the genital organs and the anus to look for gold, brilliants, or objects of value. Wirth makes a sign to me: "Get a load of this fruit tin with gold teeth, it is only from yesterday and the day before." With an extraordinary vulgarity, he says to me: "You cannot imagine what one finds every day, like gold and like brilliants, but look," and he leads me toward a jeweller responsible for administering all these treasures, and shows me all this. — 2 big 20 dollar pieces especially seem to please Wirth who makes them disappear into his pocket.

I am also shown a former head of the big department store in Berlin. A little violinist is made to play on his instrument. This is a former captain of the Austrian army, holder of the iron cross 1st class. Both of them are heads of the Jewish work detail.

The naked cadavers were thrown some meters further away, into pits of 100 x 12 x 20 meters. Some days later, these cadavers swell and afterwards collapse heavily, which permits re-covering them with a new layer; about 10 cm of sand is thrown on top; there are only a few arms and a few heads sticking out. The day of my visit, only 2 transports with about 12500 persons arrive at Belcec.

Transcription of T Va (ninth sheet)

This “factory” has been working since 1942 and “manufactures” about 11,000 dead per day. When the circle of my friends or myself heard the broadcast from London or the Voice of America we were often surprised by the innocent angels who spoke of hundreds of thousands of dead when in reality there were already more than TEN MILLIONS.

In the year 1943, the Dutch Resistance told me through Ubbink that I was requested not to supply invented atrocities, but to content myself with reproducing the strict truth; despite my pointing out these things, in August 1942, at the Swedish embassy in Berlin, people refused to believe these figures. Unfortunately, I reply to it under oath, these figures are exact.

According to my unquestionable documents, I estimate the number of defenseless human beings murdered by Adolf Hitler and Heinrich Himmler at about 20 million. It is obviously not just a matter of the 5 or 6 million European Jews who were murdered, but of all the Czech intelligentsia and the elite of other peoples like the Serbs, then the Poles, who were the most numerous, and a small number of Czechs No 3, as well. That refers to those who are called the “biologically useless” who, according to the opinion of the SS, no longer had the right to exist since they could no longer work.

Commissions of so-called doctors, equipped with magnificent cars and the paraphernalia of medical sorcery travelled from village to village, and sounded the chests of the whole population, dressed in white coats, stethoscope in hand. Whoever did not seem capable of working, from a simple glance of the eye, was put on the list of the useless and was sought out some time later and put away.

It is these young folk dear to Himmler, who judged, who very often were wet behind the ears, who had not undergone a primary school education and who congratulated each other with “dear colleague” and “*Herr* Professor” — “without these measures,” a Sturmbannfuhrer at Lublin tells me, “all of Poland will be without value to us, for it is too overpopulated and too ill. We are only doing what nature does everywhere else and what it unfortunately forgets among the other human beings.”

Even a gamekeeper confirms to me that the elimination of the weak which is part of the correct maintenance of a preserve is, in the Polish circumstances, absolutely just and indispensable. It is astonishing how much this kind of racial materialism can take place in the brains of many German intellectuals; even those who refuse to accept the massacre of the Jews were completely in agreement with the execution of the weak and the insane and justify this measure with a great deal of conviction. For many, that became so natural and indisputable that it became difficult to discuss it with a large part of the elite.

Wirth asks me not to propose to Berlin any modification in the methods of death in the gas chambers employed up to now for they have proven themselves. What is curious is that no one has asked me a single question in Berlin.

I had the prussic acid which I had brought buried.

Transcription of T Va (tenth sheet)

The next day, 19 August 1942, the car of Captain Wirth takes us to Treblinka, 120 kms north-north-east of Warsaw. The installation is almost similar but a great deal bigger than Belzec, 8 gas chambers and several mountains of suitcases, textiles, and linen.

In our honor, a feast truly Himmlerian, in the most pure old German style, is given in the common hall. The meal is simple, but everything is at the disposition of everybody in unlimited quantity. Himmler himself has given the order to give at pleasure to the men of this Kommando as much meat, butter, and above all, alcohol as they wish. Prof. Pfannenstiel makes a speech, stressing the importance and the utility of the duty of these men. Turning to me, he speaks of the "very humane" methods and of "beauty of work." This seems improbable, but I guarantee that Pfannenstiel, himself the father of 5 children, did not speak in jest, nor, ironically, but he treated this thing like a doctor with absolute seriousness. More than half of those killed were children; the normal time for killing after the transport and the very painful wait was 32 minutes. Pfannenstiel said again to the men of the Kommando: "In seeing these bodies of Jews, these pitiable figures, one understands still better how much our work will call for recognition."

On departure several kilos of butter and numerous bottles of liquor are offered to us to take away. I had great difficulty to refuse these things by arguing that, supposedly, I had plenty of them. Very happy, Pfannenstiel also pockets my share. We return by car to Warsaw. On departure, we see again a group of Jews at work who are busy in one of the common graves on a heap of cadavers. "It had been forgotten to undress those of the arrivals who were already dead; naturally, that must be recovered, because of the objects of value and the clothes,"

Captain Wirth explains to me. At Warsaw, waiting in vain for a sleeping car, I meet the secretary of the legation of the Swedish embassy in Berlin, the *Baron von Otter*, in the train; still under the fresh impression of my dreadful adventures, I told him everything with the urgent plea to communicate immediately all that to his government and to the Allies. I say to him: "In the place of numerous bombs, if the Allies sent millions of pamphlets and intelligent leaflets well done in informing the German people of all that is going on, it is probable that in some weeks or months, the German people would finish with *Adolf Hitler*."

Baron von Otter asked me for references, for this conversation was for him, as a diplomat, very delicate. I indicated to him *Dr. Dibelius* at Berlin, Bruederweg 2, eminent member of the Protestant resistance, close friend of my friend, the *Pastor Niemöller* now at Dachau.

I again saw *Baron von Otter* on two occasions at the Swedish legation. Meanwhile, he gave an account to Stockholm personally and he told me that his report had a considerable influence on Swedish-German relations.

Transcription of T Va (eleventh sheet)

Some days later to relieve my conscience, and in order to have done all that is in my power, I tried to give an account to the papal nuncio in Berlin; At my first words, I am asked whether I am a soldier; thereupon, all conversation with me is refused and I am requested to leave the legation of His Holiness immediately.

I tell this only to prove how difficult it was, even for a German, pitiless enemy of Nazism, to find a way to discredit a criminal government.

In this situation where every day tens and tens of thousands awaited killing, where a delay of some hours seemed to me criminal, if in this situation I say, a qualified representative of Jesus on earth refuses all conversation with me, what can one ask of an average citizen against Nazism? What must he do, he who hardly knows these errors, in general, except from hearsay? He who, like millions of foreigners (such as the Dutch resistance) hold these things to be terribly exaggerated, who does not have my ability, who does not have perhaps any occasion as I do to listen to the foreign radio, what must he do against Nazism? If even the representative of the Pope in Germany refuses to listen to information of this extraordinary importance on this unique violation of the law of Jesus: "Thou must love thy neighbor as thyself."

Terribly disappointed and despondent, I leave the legation where I was unable to find either advice or help. Hardly gone out, I am followed by a policeman; some minutes later, a policeman on a bicycle

also follows me. I passed minutes of immense despair and disappointment; I lifted the safety-catch of my revolver in my pocket and I mentally prepared myself for suicide. The incomprehensible happened; the policeman brushed by me at about 50 cms, stopped an instant . . . and went away. From that day, risking my life each hour, I have given an account of these atrocious deaths to hundreds of influential persons: to the *Niemöller* family, to the press attaché of the Swiss legation at Berlin, Dr. *Hochstrasser*, to the secretary of the Catholic bishop of Berlin Dr. *Winter*, requesting transmittal to the bishop and to the Pope, to Dr. *Dibelius* and to many others; thus thousands have been informed by me.

Transcription of T Va (twelfth sheet)

I must add that *Guenther* of the R.S.H.A. (I believe that he is the son of Guenther of the racial studies) asked me again, at the beginning of 1944, for large quantities of prussic acid. The poison was to be delivered to his office in the Kurfuerstenstrasse in Berlin and stored in a shed that he showed me. It concerned very large quantities, altogether several freight cars, which were to be piled up little by little and held at his disposal. This was sufficient poison to kill several millions who in this way would have disappeared without a lot of noise. Guenther told me that he did not know yet where, when, how, for what purpose, for what group this poison was to be used. In any case, it was to be constantly available. I deduced from several technical questions put by Guenther that a part, at least, of this poison was to be used to put down a large number of men in the clubs and the lecture halls. According to these meagre indications, I supposed that it related to officers or priests, in any case educated people, and the poison was to be employed in Berlin itself.

Having looked over the premises in detail, I state to Guenther that I cannot take the responsibility of stocking such quantities of poison at that spot, in the capital, since there was enough to kill twice the number of all the inhabitants. With many difficulties, I obtain the storage of this poison at Oranienburg and at Auschwitz, in the concentration camps. Afterwards I arrange things so as to use up the poison as soon as it arrives, supposedly for disinfection. The invoices of the supplying firm, the German Pest Control Corporation, of Frankfurt and Friedberg, were made out, at my request, in my name, to more readily make the poison disappear. For this reason, I avoid presenting the numerous current invoices for payment, so as not to remind the S.D. and the R.S.H.A. continually of the large quantities that ought to be available. I make the firm have patience and leave the invoices unpaid. The manager of this house, Dr. *Peters*, told me in the course of a

conversation that he has delivered prussic acid in ampoules for the execution of human beings. I never learned exactly what the group was that Guenther still was to destroy on the orders of his chief *Eickmann*.

According to the quantities, I thought first of all of the occupants of the concentration camps, and it is for that that I replied negatively to the question of Jochen, the son of Pastor Niemöller: will he ever see his father alive? Himmler's order to kill all the occupants of the concentration camps in case of need, was to be foreseen already at that time. It was equally clear that the Ukrainian teams of the death camps at least would be sacrificed in order to get rid of embarrassing witnesses. I also thought of the eventuality of the murder of the prisoners of war as a means of blackmail.

When later, *Goebbels* pointed out that, if it was necessary national socialism would slam the door behind it in a way to shake the world, I checked once more, to see whether the reserves of poison were well destroyed.

Transcription of T Va (thirteenth sheet)

Some time after, Guenther recalled me to the R.S.H.A. and asked me if it might be possible to poison the Jews interned at *Maria-Theresienstadt* by throwing prussic acid from the top of the fortifications. To prevent the execution of this plan, I declared this impracticable.

I learned later that he had obtained the prussic acid some other way and that he had all the same executed the Jews who, supposedly, led such a good life at *Maria-Theresienstadt*: it involved Jews, fathers of sons killed or holders of high decorations and having rendered special service.

The most horrible concentration camps were by no means *Belsen* or *Buchenwald*. *Auschwitz* and *Naathausen* [sic] were much worse and millions of men disappeared in the gas chambers and in the gas vehicles (mobile gas chambers); at *Auschwitz* alone millions of children were killed by a pad of prussic acid held under the nose. In the *Ravensbruck* concentration camp, I was present at these tests on living beings, performed by Dr. *Gundlach*, Hauptsturmfuehrer, on the order of SS Gruppenfuehrer Professor Dr. Gerhardt Hohenlychen.

The tests on the women were, in some way, still more repugnant and odious than in the concentration camps for men. At least, to the men one said honestly: "Pay attention, you are going to receive an injection and you're going to kick off." At the womens' concentration camp at *Ravensbruck*, one proceeded differently: There you are, Frau Meyer, we just noticed that you have an abcess in the liver, we're going to have

you treated with some injections and you are going to see that your condition is going to improve a lot.” What was the most horrible was the cynicism and the shameless irony with which this was done. It was a veritable competition, from the star of David on the death chambers right up to these humorous diagnoses.

Daily, experiments were made at Buchenwald on hundreds of detainees with 1 to 100 tablets of pervitine, then again injections of typhus. Himmler reserved for himself the authorization of such experiments performed on persons condemned to death by the S.D. The reports of these tests were all centralized in my office.

The Stabsscharfuehrer *Hoellander* gave them to me regularly.

Another day, at Oranienburg, I saw thousands of pederasts disappear without a trace into a furnace.

Transcription of T Va (fourteenth sheet)

At Mauthausen, it was the practice to do away with the Jews in the quarries, by making them fall from a height.

What is curious, is that these “work accidents” were always foreseen some minutes previously by the guards.

The SS Hauptsturmfuehrer, *Dr. Fritz Kraatz*, head of a mission to the Reich SS medical service, gave me an account of these facts with sincere disgust and has made these things public. *Kraatz* was a fanatical enemy of the Nazis

Transcription of T Va (fifteenth sheet)

At Belcec, I had the impression the day of my inspection, that after such a long wait in the chambers, everybody was truly dead; on the other hand, *Captain Wirth*, a creature without any education and without any notion of chemistry and physiology has told me of the strangest things. *Wirth* was gifted with a special love for varied experiments to take people from life to death. Thus he spoke to me of a little child that they found one morning in a gas chamber which had not been emptied the night before and who was perfectly alive and happy.

Wirth was apparently taken up with particularly interesting experiments on the weak minded, it is on them that one could best test the various degrees of sensitivity. Tests were also made with the aid of compressed air; people were put into old boilers filled, by means of a compressor, with compressed air. At Treblinca, I had the impression that certain of them were still living and were simply unconscious, which did not exclude the possibility that during the night they could revive and suffer a new martyrdom until final death.

Nearly all had their eyes open and offered a dreadful sight. In spite of my careful observation, I could not observe any movement. On the whole, not the least trouble was taken to do these executions in a humane manner. Insofar as one may have the right to use this word in connection with these facts. All this was done less by sadism than by total indifference and convenience.

The Hauptsturmfuehrer *Dr. Villing* of Dortmund spoke to me of a thing which especially impressed him: about 8,000 Polish clerics were compelled to dig ditches; then they had to undress, stand in front of these ditches naked and were shot.

Transcription of T Va (sixteenth sheet)

To the ironic questions, whether they still believed in Jesus Christ, in Mary and in their Polish people, they replied with a serene affirmation of faith that they believed more than ever in Christ, in the Holy Mother of God and in a resurrection of their people.

Villing spoke to me of this with emotion.

Other Poles died in the same exemplary fashion, above all the schoolmasters and schoolmistresses. On hearing all that spoken of, I remembered my own prison in Buschsenstrasse at Stuttgart; an inexperienced hand had scratched on the metal of my bed: "Pray, the Mother of God helps." This was for me in painful days a great consolation and my cell seemed to me a little church. I salute with gratitude this unknown brother who sent me this sign and this encouragement in my deep pain. May God reward him.

Another way of killing people in Poland was to make them climb to the top of ladders of blast furnaces and throw them inside after having killed them with a pistol shot. Many others are said to have disappeared into the brick kilns, suffocated by the gases and burned. In those cases, I do not have a source absolutely guaranteed.

One of the chiefs of police at Bromberg, the SS Sturmbannfuehrer *Haller* told the doctor who followed the course with me that it was usual when he first came to Bromberg to take the Jewish infants by the feet and to break their heads against the wall of their apartment, to avoid the noise of the fusillade. He presumably stopped this nonsense and managed to have the children shot.

Transcription of T Va (seventeenth sheet)

He found it particularly painful to be present himself, at the action of two little girls of 5 and 8 years, falling to their knees and praying. Naturally, concluded *Haller*, it was necessary afterwards that I have them shot as well. He spoke to us also of the execution of the Polish

intellectuals; they were compelled to make their graves, to lie down in them on their bellies, and were shot with an automatic pistol; those following were obliged to lie down on the warm cadavers and were shot in their turn; some, not yet dead, were shot while they were attempting to get out from between the various layers.

One of the heads of the German government of Krakau spoke to me, while carving a turkey, of a particularly good capture he had made; a man of the Polish resistance, a Jew, had refused to speak, so then he had his wrists broken; he continued to keep silent; thereupon, he was made to sit on a white-hot iron plate. "You should have seen," he says to me, "how that made him a talker."

Transcription of T Va (eighteenth sheet)

During a visit to a construction office of the Waffen SS at Lublin, the two architects told me about a visit they had made to the morgue of a prisoner-of-war camp with a view to enlarging it. "Thousands of cadavers, in general typhous, were stacked there; suddenly, they saw that some were still moving; the Rottenfuehrer, who carried the key, merely asked calmly, "Where is that?" then, took a round iron hammer just nearby, and smashed in the skulls of the persons pointed out. It was not the fact itself that astonished the architects, but the naturalness with which the action was performed.

At the time of my visit to Belcec, a Jewess had cut several of the Jewish workers, with the help of a hidden razor. *Wirth* sincerely regretted that this woman was already dead for she ought to have been punished in an exemplary manner.

The wounded Jews have been perfectly looked after by him, in order to make them believe that they would be recompensed, "and they believe that, these idiots," *Wirth* shouted, laughing.

Transcription of T Va (nineteenth sheet)

What was especially repugnant at Belcec was the competition organized between the men and boys of the transport to carry away the garments to the cars. He who works the best becomes a member of the working-group. In this way a race for life and death is started between these naked beings who carry the clothes to the laughter of the SS; naturally, they all disappear without exception into the gas chambers, only some beings very old and sick, who even when supported by others cannot drag themselves to the chambers, were put aside and shot.

Some particularly gripping impressions do not leave me any more: the little Jewish boy of 3 years who, wool-gathering, distributes the

pieces of string to tie up the pairs of shoes. Even this child was pressed into service in the horrible death machine of *Hitler*.

I think also of a little girl who, one meter from the chamber, lost her little coral necklace; this necklace is found by a little boy of 3 years; he picks it up, looks at it lovingly, is happy with it, and, the following moment, is pushed, I must say with gentleness, by a guard preserving a remnant of feeling, to the interior of the chamber.

Transcription of T Va (twentieth sheet)

The SS Hauptsturmfuehrer *Obermeyer* told me the following story: in a nearby village, he had met a Jew coming from Pirmasinz, his home town. During the war, this Jew had been a noncommissioned officer, a very decent chap. As children, they played together and he even once saved the life of *Obermeyer* — *Obermeyer* declared that he was now going to take this man with his wife into his work unit. I asked him what was going to happen later. He looked at me with an astonished air: "What do you think will happen? The same thing as the others, there is no other solution; finally, perhaps, I shall have them shot."

I must say in order to be fair, that I have met certain SS who emphatically condemned these methods and have become furious adversaries of Nazism.

Transcription of T Va (twenty-first sheet)

I think above all of Hauptscharfuehrer *Hoellander* who always kept me informed of all the secrets and who always got rid of everything that could have been compromising for me.

Another anti-Nazi was the head of the interior section of the hospital of the SS at Berlin, the SS Sturmbannfuehrer *Dr. Focht*, who, since 1941, has frequently criticized openly these methods, knowingly risking his head. The same thing is valid for the surgeon SS Hauptsturmfuehrer Dr. Nissen of Itzehoe and Dr. Sorgue of Jena. The three chief pharmacists of the Waffen SS, Blumenreuther, Behmenburg, and Rudolphi were members of the group of officers of 20 July. Among the Dutch and Belgian SS, $\frac{2}{3}$ were led by force and by trickery under the pretext of sports courses. If they afterwards refused to obey, they were immediately shot.

Every person who, with an imprudent action, touched the trousers of a comrade even from the outside, was immediately shot. This order emanated directly from Himmler and cost the life of many very young SS men, coming out of the Hitler Youth and taken by force into the SS.

Numbers belonging to the aviation and the navy were abruptly transferred to the SS. It would be unfair, despite the very understand-

able hatred that the SS have unleashed, not to make a distinction.

It must be said here that, frequently, the police have been much worse than the SS. The President of the German Red Cross, the SS Gruppenfuehrer *Dr. Grawitz*, is one of the principals responsible for the situation of the concentration camps.

Text T VI

It is typewritten, composed in German, dated 6 May 1945. There is no signature, although one reads on the last page: Gez: Kurt Gerstein. (Gez = *Gezeichnet* = signed)

It is preserved at the National Archives in Washington.

It consists of thirteen pages.

T VI – Page 1 (the last 4 lines) and page 2 (lines 1 to 35)

... When I heard of the massive slaughter of the mentally sick at Hadamar, Grafenesk and other places, I had only one wish: "You must go yourself and look into this devil's cauldron and make known to the people what is happening, even at the risk of your life." In this, I had no need of scruples, since I had myself twice been the victim of the agents of the SD, who had wormed their way into the very heart of the fraternal Council of the Confessional Church and even participated in the most intimate fellowships of prayer and got down on their knees. I said to myself: What you can do, I have long since been able to do and I registered myself voluntarily to enter the SS. This all the more so as my sister-in-law Bertha Ebeling of Saarbrücken had been put to death at Hadamar. On the recommendation of two officials of the Gestapo who had studied my case, it was easy for me to be accepted in the Waffen-SS. These gentlemen were completely of the opinion that an idealism such as mine should at all costs be used for the NSDAP. In this way, they themselves showed me the road which I afterwards followed. I received my basic training with 40 doctors at Hamburg-Langenhorn, then at Arnheim-Holland and at Oranienburg. At Arnheim, I made immediate contact through the instrumentality of my student friend, the manufacturer Ubbink of Doesburg, Grad. Eng., with a Dutch resistance movement. By reason of my double studies, technical and medical, I was called straightaway to the central Administration of the SS, Service D, sanitary affairs of the Waffen-SS, Hygiene Section. Admittedly this service proved to be one of great broadness of outlook. Thus, it was left entirely up to me to choose an activity for myself. To meet an absolutely pressing need, I constructed disinfection installations, mobile and fixed, in great number, notably for the prisoners' camps, the concentration camps and the combat

troops. Without wishing to boast, I obtained in this field some extraordinary successes and I was henceforth taken to be a very special technical genius. This is why I was also called on frequently for projects of this type by the Ministry of the Eastern Territories and the Ministry of Labor. Still the fact remains that we actually succeeded in containing the terrible epidemic of exanthematic typhus of 1941 which at times caused several tens of thousands of deaths each day in the prisoners' camps and the concentration camps. That is why I very quickly became second lieutenant and then lieutenant. In December, I found myself again in great danger, for the party tribunal, which had decided my expulsion from the party, had received knowledge of my accession to a responsible position in the SS. By reason of my successes and the general good evaluation of me, I was however protected by my service and maintained in my position. In February 1942, I became head of the technical sanitary service, which comprised also questions of drinking water and all technical disinfection, including that with the aid of highly toxic gases.

T VI – Page 2 (lines 36 to the end) and page 3 (lines 1 to 25)

On 8 June 1942, I received in my office of work the visit of Sturmbannführer SS Günther of the Central Service of State Security of the "Kurfürstenstrasse". G. came in civilian clothes: I did not know him until then. With all sorts of mysterious allusions, he gave me the order to obtain a quantity of hydrocyanic acid (260 kg) and to go with the poison, by means of a vehicle of the SD, to a place that only the driver knew. The affair appeared like one of the most secret affairs of the Reich of the moment. Some time later, I went with the vehicle in question to Kollin near Prague. I could roughly imagine to myself the kind of mission. I accepted it however because here chance was leading me to my goal: to cast an eye into all this machinery, as I had been wishing to do for a long time. Moreover, I did not have the slightest scruple. For if I had not accepted the mission, another would have executed it in the way wanted by the SD, whereas, thanks to my authority in the field of highly toxic gases, I could without difficulty get rid of the entire load, as being decomposed or deteriorated. In this way, I could all by myself, prevent a wrongful use of the hydrocyanic acid to kill people.

As there was still a place in the car, I declared myself ready to take along the Prof. Dr. med. Pfannenstiel, holder of the chair of hygiene at the University of Marburg/Lahn. At Kollin I had been given to understand, by purposely maladroit technical questions to the Czech personnel of the factory, that the hydrocyanic acid was intended for killing human beings. I always acted the same afterwards, as the best

way of spreading the thing around among the people. At Kollin, quickly, the vehicle was inspected with care. At Lublin, we were received by the SS Gruppenführer General Globocnec. He said to us: This secret affair of the Reich is actually one of the most secret, one can even say the most secret which exists. Anyone who does not hold his tongue is immediately shot. Only yesterday, we silenced two talkers. At the moment — it was the 17 August — we have three installations:

1) **Belcec**, on the highway from Lublin to Lemberg in the north corner, exactly at the spot where the road cuts the demarcation line with the Russians. Daily output: about 15,000 executions. Average utilization until now since April: 11,000 per day.

2) **Sobibor**, near Lublin in Poland; I do not know exactly where. 20,000 put to death per day.

3) **Treblinka**, 120 km to the NNE of Warsaw in Poland. 25,000 put to death per day. Average utilization about 13,500 per day since June 1942.

4) **Maidanek**, near Lublin. Was then still in construction.

Accompanied by the Head of all these death factories, Captain of Police Wirth, I have inspected Belcec, Treblinka, and Maidanek, in a thorough manner and while they were still functioning. Wirth is the same one who, on the order of Hitler and Himmler, killed the mentally sick at Hadamar, Grafeneck, and other places.

T VI – page 3 (lines 26 to the end) and page 4 (the first 5 lines)

Globocnec said to us, that is to say he addressed himself solely to me: It is your task to disinfect large quantities of textiles, linen, clothing, and shoes which remain in the installations. These quantities represent 10 to 20 times the product of the collection of textiles. All these collections are essentially made only for the purpose of making the origin of the large quantities of old clothes plausible in some way to the foreign workers and the German people. Your other task still more important naturally, is to change the actual operation itself of these installations of death. The thing works now with diesel exhaust gases coming from an old Russian diesel engine. This must be changed in some way to work more quickly, and there, I think above all of hydrocyanic acid. The day before yesterday, on 15 August 1942, the Führer and Himmler were here. I may not make out a permit to people who must visit the installations, but, to keep the secret, conduct them there personally. Pfannenstiel then asked: “What did the Führer say of all this?” and Globocnec replied: “The whole operation must be brought to completion the quickest way possible!” In his company, there was also the ministerial counsellor, Dr. Herbert Linden of the

Ministry of the Reich. He is of the opinion that it would be better to burn the cadavers instead of burying them. One day a generation could come after us who would not understand all this. Whereupon, I, Globocnec, said: "Gentlemen, if ever there should come after us a generation who will not understand our great task so worthy of recognition and so necessary, then it is our National Socialism altogether which would have been in vain. On the contrary I am of the opinion that bronze plaques should be set in the ground on which it would be written that we, that it was we, who had the courage to accomplish this work so necessary and important. – and thereupon, Hitler: Good, Globocnec, that is truly also my point of view. It was the other point of view, however, which prevailed. The cadavers were then burned with the help of petrol and diesel oil on gigantic grills improvised with railway rails. It was then necessary for me to visit the vast offices of these establishments of death at Lublin, at the barracks named "Julius Schreck."

T VI – page 4 (lines 6 to 43)

The next day, we went to Belcec with the car of Captain Wirth. A special little station had been built right against a hill of yellow sand on the north side of the road. To the south of the road, there were some administration buildings with the inscription "Special Commando of Belcec of the Waffen SS." Globocnec turned me over to Hauptsturmführer Obermeyer of Pirmasens, who showed me the installation with great reluctance. Behind thick brushwood hedges, right near the station, there was first of all a large hut with the inscription "Cloak Room." There was a large service-window, "Deposit of money and objects of value." There followed a room with about a hundred stools, the hairdressing salon. Then a birch tree pathway of about 150 meters, enclosed to the right and left by a double barbed wire, with signboards: "To the rooms for baths and inhalation." Next, there was a building before us, a little like a bathhouse, with a little stairway to the right and to the left of that a large concrete vase with geraniums. On the roof, in the guise of a weather-vane, the star of David in wrought iron. In front of the building, an inscription "Foundation Heckenholt." I did not see anything more that afternoon. In particular, I did not see a single dead person. But throughout, and again above the road, a pestilential stench of cadavers, and millions of flies buzzed about everywhere. Within the bathhouse itself, set three each on both sides of a corridor, were rooms almost like garages, each of 5 x 5 meters in area and 1.90 m in height. The following morning, some minutes before 7 hours, I am told: the first transport is going to arrive! In fact, at 7 hours exactly, a train arrived of 45 cars coming from Lemberg. Behind the little windows

latticed with barbed wire, one saw dreadfully pale children, and also some men and women with features contorted by anguish. The train disappeared behind the hedge. 200 Ukrainians abruptly open the doors and with lashing leather whips drive out of the train some 6,700 persons of whom 1,450 are already dead on their arrival. A loud-speaker gives instructions: undress completely, take off even artificial limbs, spectacles, etc. (To a young girl a guard says: take off your glasses; inside you will receive others). Deliver the objects of value to the service-window, without voucher or receipt. Under the arm of a little Jewish boy, someone presses a handful of strings, which the child of three years, distraught, distributes to people: To tie the shoes together! For, in the pile of 35 to 40 meters high, no one could afterwards have retrieved the matching shoes. Then the women and the young girls to the hairdresser, who cuts their hair in two or three cuts of the scissors and makes it disappear into large potato sacks. "That is intended for the submarines for certain special uses, for the airtight joints or something like that!" the Unterscharführer who is on duty at this place tells me.

T VI – page 4 (lines 44 to end) and page 5 (lines 1 to 43)

I foretold even then to many people that these submarines would soon navigate no longer because this weapon so ingenious would become blunted since it was stained with floods of innocent blood. God would arrange things in such a way that they would *not* work any *more!* And in fact, a little time after, events proved me right! Then the throng starts moving; in front a superb young girl; and so they go on, following the pathway, all naked, men, women, and children, the men with artificial limbs which they had to take off supported on both sides by the others.

As for me, I stay with Captain Wirth up above on the ramp, between the death chambers. Mothers with their sucklings at the breast, they walk up, hesitate, then enter into the death chambers. At the corner of the birch-tree pathway stands a robust elderly SS man, surrounded by these poor people. In a voice like a minister's, he says to them: Not the least thing will happen to you! In the chambers you must only breathe deeply, this dilates the lungs, this inhalation is necessary because of the sicknesses and the epidemics. To the question, what would happen to them later? he replies: Yes, naturally, the men must work, to build houses and roads, but the women have no need to work. Only if they wish, they can help in the work or in the kitchen. For some of these poor people, a little glimmer of hope which suffices for them to pass the few steps up to the chambers without hesitation. The majority know; the smell announces their fate! Thus, they climb up the little

stairway, and then they see everything! The mothers with their babies at the breast, the little naked children, the adults, men and women, in confusion, all naked – they hesitate – but they enter into the death chambers, pushed forward by the others behind them or by the leather whips of the SS. The majority without saying a word. Like a lamb led to a slaughterhouse! A Jewess of about 40 years with flashing eyes cries out: May the blood which is spilt here in the basest of murders fall again on the murderers! She receives 5 or 6 blows of the whip on her face, personally from Captain Wirth, then also disappears into the chamber. Some address themselves to me: Oh Mister, help us, but help us! Many pray. But I cannot help them, I pray with them, I squeeze myself into a corner and cry in a loud voice to my God and to theirs. There is enough noise around me, I can allow myself to cry in a loud voice to my God. How I would have wished to enter the death chambers with them; how I would have wished to share their death. They would then have found an SS officer in uniform in their chambers; they would not have protested for that; they would have considered the thing an accident; one would have announced in reference to me: “Died in service for his beloved Führer faithfully served in the execution of an important task for the Reichsführer . . .”¹⁸ No, that won’t do. I cannot yet yield to the temptation to die with these people. I know it well: There are not 10 persons who see what I see and what I have seen, I who have a view of the whole here, of all the installations and their organization. Certainly, not one apart from myself sees this as an adversary, as an enemy of this gang of murderers. So I must live and first of all make known what I see here. To be sure, this is the most difficult service, very difficult. The chambers are filling. Pack well, that is what Captain Wirth has ordered. The people are stepping on each other’s feet, 700 to 800 persons to 25 square meters, 45 cubic meters. I make an estimate: average weight at the most 35 kg, more than half are children, specific gravity 1, thus 25,250 kg of human beings per chamber. Wirth is right, if the SS men push a little, one can cram 750 persons into 45 cubic meters! – and the SS men push them with their horsewhips and compel them to enter, as many as is physically possible. The doors close.

T VI – page 5 (lines 44 to the end) and page 6 (lines 1 to 25)

During this time, the others are waiting outside, naked. Meanwhile the second transport has also arrived. Someone tells me, naked of course in winter also and in cold weather. Yes, but they can catch their death, say I, who am usually prudent, who asks absolutely no question, who acts the part of one not interested, this word escapes from me. “Yes, that is exactly what they’re here for,” an SS man replies to me

in his country dialect. Now at last I understand why the whole installation is called "Heckenholt." Heckenholt is the operator of the diesel, a little technician and a tireless worker. Already during the liquidation of the mentally ill, he has gained unprecedented merit according to Wirth by his zeal and his inventive mind. He is also the constructor of all the installations. It is with the exhaust gases of his Diesel that the people here have to be killed. But the Diesel was not working. That happened relatively seldom, I was told. Captain Wirth arrives. One can see that it is unpleasant to him that this happens just today, when I am here. But yes, I see everything! and I wait. My stopwatch has quietly recorded everything. 50 minutes, 70 minutes, the Diesel does not start! The people are waiting in their gas chambers. In vain. One hears them weeping, sobbing. "Like in the synagogue!" Professor Pfannenstiel remarks, his ear against the wooden door. Captain Wirth strikes the Ukrainian who must help Heckenholt, full in the face with his horsewhip. At the end of 2 hours 49 minutes – the stopwatch has well recorded everything – the Diesel starts. Right up to this moment, the people in the 4 chambers already filled – 4 x 750 persons in 4 x 45 cubic meters! – are living. Again 25 minutes pass. Right, many are already dead now. One sees it through the little skylight, through which the electric light illuminates the chamber for an instant. Wirth had questioned me minutely to know whether I thought it better to make people die in a lighted room or without light. He asked me that in the tone in which one asks whether one sleeps better with or without a bolster. At the end of 28 minutes, only a few were still alive. Finally, at the end of 32 minutes, all are dead. At the other side, the men of the working party open the wooden doors! They have been promised – themselves Jews! – freedom and some thousandths of all the valuables found for their terrible work. Three bookkeepers keep the accounts with great exactitude and minutely calculate the thousandths.

T VI – page 6 (lines 26 to the end)

The dead are standing tightly one against the other like columns of basalt in the chambers. There would not have been space to fall or even to lean forward. Even in death, one recognizes the families. Convulsed by death, they clasp hands in such a way that it is difficult to separate them one from the other in order to free the chambers for the next batch. The cadavers are thrown outside, wet with sweat and urine, soiled with filth and menstrual blood on the legs. The cadavers of children fly through the air. There is no time, the horsewhips of the Ukrainians whistle over the work detail. Two dozen dentists open the mouths with hooks to look for gold — gold to the left — without gold

to the right! Other dentists extract with pincers and hammers the gold teeth and the crowns out of the jaws. Captain Wirth is jumping around among them all over the place. He is in his element. Some of the workers check the genital parts to look for gold, brilliants, and objects of value. Wirth calls to me: Feel the weight of this fruit tin full of gold teeth; it is only from yesterday and the day before! With a pronunciation incredible and incorrect, he says to me: You would not believe what one can find every day of gold and brilliants (he pronounced this with 2 L's and without "Y") and also dollars. But look for yourself! And he took me to a jeweller responsible for administering all these treasures and he had me see everything. Then again I was shown a former head of the *Kaufhaus des Westens* in Berlin, W. and a little violinist was also made to play in my honor. He is a former captain of the imperial and royal army of Austria with the Iron Cross 1st class; these are the two chiefs of the Jewish work detail. The naked corpses, on wooden carts, were thrown into 100 x 12 x 20 meter pits a distance of only a few meters away. After some days, fermentation made the cadavers swell, then they collapsed heavily in a short time afterwards, so that a new layer could be thrown on top; then about 10 cm of sand was spread on top, with the result that only a few isolated heads and arms stuck out. The day of my visit there arrived at Belcec only two transports with, in total, 12,500 persons.

T VI – page 7 (lines 1 to 37)

This installation has been functioning since April 1942 and effects on average 1,000 killings per day. When I and my circle of friends listened to the radio of London or the Voice of America, we were often astonished by those innocent angels who came up with figures of hundreds of thousands of dead, whereas there were already tens of millions of them. The Dutch resistance movement had asked me in 1943 through Graduate Engineer Ubbink of Doesburg, not to supply them with atrocities, but [facts] of the strictest authenticity. Although I transmitted these things in August 1942 to the Swedish Legation in Berlin, apparently no one wanted to believe these figures at all. Yet nevertheless they are true, I attest to it under oath. I estimate the number of those who, defenseless and unarmed, have been murdered at the instigation of Adolf Hitler and Heinrich Himmler, drawn without any possibility of resistance into those murderous traps where they were put to death, as at least 20,000,000 human beings. Because most certainly it is not just a matter of only some 5 or 6 million European Jews who were thus put to death, but above all the Polish intelligentsia and a great part of the Czech, as well as the management classes of other peoples, for example the Serbs, but most especially the

Poles and the Czechs. No. III. It was these who were said to be biologically without value, and who, from the fact that they truly could not work any longer, no longer had the right to live from the point of view of the Nazis. Commissions of so-called doctors went from village to village and from town to town, in beautiful limousines and with a complete medical paraphernalia; dressed in white coats and supplied with stethoscopes, they examined the whole population. Whoever, according to all appearances, was no longer in a condition to work, was put on the list as a useless mouth and some time afterwards taken away and gassed. And those who decided this often did not possess even a primary education and awarded each other (the honorifics) "Dear Colleague!" and "Herr Medical Advisor!" Yes, without these measures, an SS-Sturmbannführer at Lublin told me, all of Poland would be without value for us, since it is in every way overpopulated and sick. We are only compensating for what everywhere else nature itself does and which it has unfortunately forgotten to do with men! At Treblinka, I saw a certain number of workers who, the following day, were turning over the cadavers in the graves. "It was forgotten to undress the people who arrived already dead. Obviously it is necessary to retrieve that because of the textiles and the objects of value," Captain Wirth told me. Wirth begged me not to propose to Berlin any kind of change in the gas chambers in use up till then or in the methods of putting to death, given the fact that they had stood their test as well as possible and were well run. Curiously, I was never asked such questions in Berlin. As for the hydrocyanic acid which I brought, I had it buried.

T VI – Page 7 (line 38 to the end) and page 8 (lines 1 to 18)

The next day, 19 August 1942, we went with the car of Captain Wirth to Treblinka, 120 km to the NNE of Warsaw. The installation was almost the same, but noticeably bigger than at Belzec. Eight gas chambers and veritable mountains of suitcases, of textiles and underclothes. In our honor, a banquet was given in the common hall in the typical old-German style of Himmler. The food was simple, but everything was available in unlimited quantity. Himmler had himself ordered that the men of these commandos should receive as much meat, butter and other things, especially alcohol, as they wished. Professor Dr. med. Pfannenstiel made a speech in which he explained to the men the usefulness of their task and the importance of their great mission. To me only, he spoke of the "very humane methods" and of the "beauty of the work." This has an air of being absolutely incredible but I guarantee that he did not say it as a joke but absolutely seriously! As a doctor, it is in this way he styled these things – To the teams, he

said in particular again: When one sees these bodies of Jews, only then does one understand clearly to what extent your task merits recognition. On our departure, we were again offered several kilos of butter and numerous bottles of liqueurs to take away. I had some difficulty refusing these things under the pretext that I had sufficient of all that from our supposed farm. On which, Pfannenstiel very happily pocketed my share as well. – Afterwards, we went by car to Varsovie. There, when I was looking in vain for a bunk in the sleeping car, I met in the train the secretary of the legation of the Swedish embassy at Berlin: Baron von Otter. Still under the very recent impression of the terrible things that I had just seen, I recounted everything to him while begging him to make it known at once to his government and to the Allies, since every delay must cost the lives of thousands, of tens of thousands of people. Von Otter asked me for a reference: I gave him Herr Superintendent-General Dr. Otto Dibelius, Berlin, Brüderweg 2, a leading member of the evangelical resistance movement and at the same time a close friend of my friend Pastor Martin Niemöller. I met Herr von Otter twice again at the Swedish legation. Meantime, he had reported personally to Stockholm and told me that this report had had a considerable influence on Swedish-German relations.

T VI – page 8 (lines 18 to 33)

I tried in the same affair to make a report to the papal nuncio at Berlin. There, I was asked whether I was a soldier. Upon which I was refused all further discussion. I was invited to leave the Embassy of His Holiness immediately. I say that here because that shows to what extent it was difficult for a German to find advice in his distress when he could not even find help and counsel in such a dreadful necessity from the representative of His Holiness, the Vicar of Christ on Earth! On leaving the papal embassy, I was followed by a policeman on a bicycle. I had lifted the safety catch on my revolver in my pocket to blow my brains out when, incomprehensibly, this policeman passed very close by me, then turned back. Risking my head daily, and at the risk of being tortured and hanged, I then reported all that to hundreds of important persons, among others the secretary of the Catholic bishop of Berlin, Dr. Winter, in order that he transmit it to H. E. Monseigneur the Bishop of the Holy See.

T VI – page 8 (lines 18 to the end) and page 9 (lines 1 to 21)

I must add that Günther of the Central Office of Security of the Reich (I believe he is the son of the “Rassen-Günther”) at the beginning of 1944, asked once more for very large quantities of

hydrocyanic acid for a very obscure purpose. The poison was to be delivered to his offices in the Kurfürstenstrasse, and stored there in a shed which he showed me. It concerned very large quantities, to the total of several freight cars, which was to be accumulated little by little and held at his disposal. The poison was sufficient to kill many millions of persons. Günther said that he did not yet know and that one could not yet foresee, if, when, to what purpose, for what group of persons the poison would or would not be utilized. In any case, it was to be there constantly available. From certain questions of a technical nature which Günther asked, I concluded that one probably had to have in mind the killing of a very great number of persons in a kind of club or lecture hall. After a detailed inspection of the premises, I explained to Günther that I could not in any way take the responsibility of storage of this poison in the shed in question in the very center of the capital of the Reich, considering that this poison was sufficient to kill at least twice the total population of Berlin and that its decomposition and gasification, especially in summer, were probable. With great difficulty, I managed to convince him to stock this poison in the concentration camps of Oranienburg and Auschwitz. Afterwards I arranged matters in a way that after its arrival the poison would immediately disappear at each place for disinfection purposes which constantly required cars of hydrocyanic acid there. The invoices of the supplying company — *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Schädlingbekämpfung* (German Pest Control Corporation), Frankfurt a.M. and Friedburg — I made out in my name, supposedly on account of secrecy, in reality in order not to be hindered in my arrangements and to be better able to get rid of the poison. For the same reason, I always avoided presenting for payment the numerous invoices which were accumulating, for in that way it would have been necessary continually to remind the SD of the existence of this stock and an investigation of the situation would certainly have been made by the paying office according to regulations. Also I preferred to give assurances to the firm following its reminders (for payment) of the orders and leave the invoices unpaid. The Manager of Degesch told me moreover during a conversation that he had delivered hydrocyanic acid in ampoules to kill people. What group of persons Günther was to kill on the instructions of his superior Eichmann should the need arise, I never learned. From the number, I thought of the occupants of the concentration camps and of the foreign workers, but also of the officers, of the German clergy and of prisoners of war. Especially when Goebbels said later that possibly National Socialism would slam the door violently behind it, I once more carefully verified that this reserve of death had really been destroyed. The order of Himmler to kill all the occupants of the concentration camps should things be in a bad way

was already then to be foreseen.

T VI – page 9 (lines 21 to 44)

One other time Günther asked me if it was possible at Maria-Theresienstadt, in the moats of the fortress where the Jews who were interned there had the right to walk, to poison them by throwing cans of cyanide from the top. To make this terrible plan ineffective, I stated that it was impossible. I learned later that the SD had however obtained the hydrocyanic acid by another way and that it had killed all the same the Jews who were, it seems, so comfortable at Theresienstadt. They were the fathers of sons who had fallen in battle, Jews of great merit, holders of high decorations. Moreover, the most frightful concentration camps were not at all those of Belsen or Buchenwald. Very much worse were Mauthausen-Gusen near Linz on the Danube and Auschwitz. Down there millions of men disappeared into the gas chambers and the gas vehicles (mobile chambers). At Auschwitz alone, millions of children were killed by holding a pad of hydrocyanic acid under the nose. At the Ravensbrück concentration camp for women near Fürstenberg in Mecklenburg, I saw tests on living women performed by Hauptsturmführer Dr.med. Grundlach on the order of SS Gruppenführer Professor Dr. Gebhardt-Hohenlynchen. In addition, I was able to have knowledge in my work of numerous reports of this kind. These concerned, for example, the tests of Pervitin — right up to 100 tablets per day – on 100 to 200 detainees, and this right up until death finally followed. Other tests of this kind were made with serum and lymph — for example with the most varied vaccines against typhus. Himmler had reserved to himself the personal prerogative of approving such tests on persons condemned to death by the SD. In addition, one day at Oranienburg I saw several hundreds and even several thousands of homosexuals disappear without a trace into the ovens.

T VI – page 9 (lines 44 to 50)

At Mauthausen, it was usual to make the Jews work at the quarry and to throw them afterwards, as if by accident, from the top of a rocky cliff. They lay dead down below and were registered as accidents. The SS-Hauptsturmführer Dr. Krantz — a fierce anti-Nazi — a native of Bonn on the Rhine, frequently spoke to me and many other persons with indignation about the numerous actions of this sort that he had seen.

T VI – page 9 (the last 4 lines) and page 10 (lines 1 to 20)

At Belcec, the day of my visit, I had the impression that after such a long wait in the chambers all were truly dead. But Captain Wirth, a man totally devoid of culture and without the least knowledge of chemistry and physiology, had reported the strangest things to me. Obviously Wirth had an avowed predilection for tests on men when they were being killed. Thus he spoke to me of a little child that they had taken out of the gas chamber in the morning, completely unharmed after having passed the night in there without it having been “unloaded.” He said they had set up particularly interesting experiments with the mentally ill. That was where they had observed the most varied sensitivities of individuals. Tests had also been made with compressed air; people were put into boilers into which compressed air was introduced by means of the ordinary compressors used in asphaltting the streets. — At Treblinca, I had the impression that at least a certain number were still living and were only unconscious. Nearly all had their eyes open and presented a terrible aspect. In spite of my attentive observation, I was not however able to notice any movement. On the whole, no one has taken any trouble so to speak to effect the killing in a manner — let us say — “humane” insofar as one could use the term in such a context! — And this undoubtedly less from sadism than from complete indifference and laziness in regard to these things. The SS Hauptsturmführer Dr. med. Villing of Dortmund told me of a particularly dignified death. It concerned several thousands — 8,000 I believe, priests and members of the Polish clergy. These were compelled to dig long and deep ditches themselves; then they had to undress completely, place themselves in front of the ditches, and then they were shot.

T VI – page 10 (lines 20 to 40)

To the mocking and sarcastic questions whether they still believed in Jesus Christ, in Mary, and the Polish people, they replied by firmly confessing Christ, the Holy Mother of God, particularly that of Tchenstchau, and in affirming their faith in the resurrection of their people; Villing spoke of it with tears and with the deepest emotion and distress. Other Poles also died in a similarly dignified and exemplary manner, in particular the teachers, men and women. In hearing talk of all this, I remembered my own imprisonment in Büchsen street in Stuttgart. With an almost childish hand someone had scratched there in clumsy lettering on the edge of my iron bed: “I pray you, Mother of God, help me!” — In Poland, a confirmed method of killing people was to make them climb up the spiral staircase of the blast furnaces, to execute them at the top however with a pistol shot, and then to make them disappear into the blast furnace. It is said that many people were

asphyxiated by the fumes of brick ovens and after that burned. Here however my source is not one hundred percent sure. – One of the police chiefs at Bromberg, the SS Sturmbannführer Haller told the doctors in my course and myself that on his arrival at Bromberg, it was usual to smash the skulls of the Jewish children immediately against the wall of the apartments to avoid the noise of shots. He had put a stop to this excess and seen to it that the children were killed by shooting.

T VI – page 10 (lines 40 to the end) and page 11 (the first 3 lines)

He still remembered clearly two little girls of 3 and 5 years who had fallen to their knees in front of him and had prayed. But I had to have them shot too, of course, said Haller. Haller spoke to us of the execution of the Polish intelligentsia. These people, too, had to dig ditches, lie face down and were then killed with a machine pistol. Those following had afterwards to lie down on the cadavers which were still warm and were similarly slaughtered. Many afterwards had been killed when they were trying to worm themselves between the cadavers and climb outside, for they were not yet completely dead.

One of the heads of the government at Cracow told me, while carving a turkey, of a particularly successful capture that they had made. A man of the Polish resistance, a Jew, had clammed up in stolid silence. On this, they broke some of his joints. As he continued to keep silent, he had been seated on the red hot plate of a stove. You should have seen how he recovered his tongue!

T VI – page 11 (lines 4 to 18)

On occasion of a visit to the construction office of the Waffen SS at Lublin, the two architects informed us that that very morning, they had measured the mortuary of a prisoners' camp with the purpose of enlarging it. Thousands of cadavers, the majority typhous, were piled up there. All of a sudden, they had seen some of them move. The "*Rottenführer*" who kept the key had only asked: "Where?" then he had taken a round rod of iron which was there ready and smashed the skull of these people. It was not the action itself, the architects said, which had astonished them, but the way in which it seemed to be a matter of course! On the occasion of my visit, a Jewess dealt some Jewish workers cuts in the neck with the blade of a razor she kept hidden. Wirth deeply regretted that the woman was already dead, she ought to have been punished in an exemplary manner! He scrupulously had medical care given to the wounded Jews so that they might believe that they really would be left alive, settled and recompensed!

“And the people believe it, the people believe it! These idiots!” cried Wirth.

T VI – page 11 (lines 18 to 33)

At Belcec, the competition organized among the men and the young people of the transports was particularly horrible: it consisted of hauling the clothes right up to the cars. Whoever does the most will go to the work detail! This resulted, it seems, in a life-or-death competition among these naked men who hauled the clothes to the laughter of the SS. Of course, all disappeared afterwards into the chambers. Only a few, old and sick, who could no longer drag themselves up to the chambers, even supported by the others, were taken to one side and straightaway shot. Some touching scenes still pass before my eyes: the dreamy little Jewish boy of three years who had to distribute the pieces of string to tie up the shoes. Even a child like him was harnessed without knowing it to Hitler’s dreadful machine of death and murder in the system of pillage of Himmler and Wirth. Or else I think of a little girl who had lost, one meter from the chamber, a little chain of coral that a little Jewish boy of three years found: how he picked up the little chain, looked at it with love and seemed completely happy with it, and at the following instant was pushed — yes, I must say it — this time with gentleness to the interior of the chamber.

T VI – page 11 (lines 33 to 43)

The SS Hauptsturmführer Obermeyer of Pirmasens told me: “in a village in the vicinity I met a Jew and his wife who come from my home town of Pirmasens. He had been adjutant during the Great War, a very good lad. As children, we played together; he even saved my life once when I had almost been killed by a car. Him and his wife, I am going to take them now into my work detail.” I asked Obermeyer what would happen later to this man. He looked at me with astonishment: “What will happen to him? Exactly the same thing as for all the others. There is nothing else. Perhaps I shall have them shot.” On the other hand, I have met in the SS a certain number of men who sincerely condemned these methods and had become thereby furious adversaries of Nazism.

T VI – page 11 (lines 43 to the end) and page 12 (excepting the last 3 lines)

I think above all of the chief staff officer of the senior director of hygiene in the department of medicine of the Reich SS and of the

police, the Hauptscharführer Heinrich Holländer. He kept me informed of all the affairs of any importance and saw to it that anything that might in some way have accused me or made me suspect in my job was made to disappear. I would myself have long since ended up in the oven, if this faithful friend, a Catholic and ardent anti-Nazi, had not held over me his protecting hand. A convinced anti-Nazi, he was also the director of internal services of the SS hospital in Berlin, SS Sturmbannführer Dr. med. Focht who from 1941 found numerous and courageous words to condemn the methods of the Nazis and the SS. It was the same with the surgeons of SS Hauptsturmführer Dr. med. Nissen of Itzehoe and Dr. med. Sorge of Iena. An effective and militant anti-Nazi also was the SS Hauptsturmführer Dr. in geology Fritz Krantz of Bonn, who made known among the people round him, at the constant risk of being hanged, the numerous horrors that it was given to him to see in the concentration camps. Among the group of officers of 20 July 1944 must be counted the chief pharmacists of the Waffen SS, the SS Gruppenführer Dr. pharm. Blumenreuther and his two assistants SS Sturmbannführer Dr. Behmenburg and Dr. Rudolphi. The latter, in October 1944, trampled with his feet the portrait of the Führer which was in his office.

Among the Belgian SS, Dutch and Luxembourgiens, $\frac{2}{3}$ of the effectives had been incorporated by force by incredible manoeuvres of lies and deceit about so-called sports or other courses. Before people had time to know what was going on and even before putting on the uniform, they were sworn in by the sole fact of their presence at an oath taking, and in case of refusal they were treated as deserters or hanged for insubordination or at best shot. With what rigor such actions were treated, is shown by the fact that very young members of the Waffen SS were shot quite simply for the fact of having grabbed a comrade by the seat of his trousers in the region of the pubis. This order to chastise even the least signs of pervert tendencies was brought to the notice of all the members of the SS and signed by Himmler himself. Thousands of boys of the Hitler Youth were pushed into the SS against their will like the foreigners mentioned above. It is the same with the other corps of the Wehrmacht — in particular the Luftwaffe and the navy — compelled to join the SS on the order of Hitler and Himmler. It would be absolutely false and unjust — highly unjust — to wish to make each SS man co-responsible for the terrible crimes of the SS without examining these aforesaid circumstances. It is necessary to mention here also that the police were often considerably worse than the SS. At the time of the apprehension and the assembling of the Jews with their transport in view, for example, at the time of their delivery to the abattoirs of Himmler, they supplied his worst agents, even though it would have been easy for the old experienced police officials to get rid

of a good part at least of the Jews by means of the card-index. Besides, it is only justice to expect on the part of these old officials, already mature and who had to know what is just and unjust, other behavior than that of the Hitler Youth or the young SS devoid of maturity. The fact that Himmler was not only Reichsführer of the SS but at the same time chief of the German police is very often not sufficiently taken into consideration. The blood guilt of the police in the smooth execution of the massacre of the Jews is enormous, even if this was effected in great part at a desk without risks and in the security of an office. In this regard, it is hardly necessary to make a distinction between Gestapo and police and this very generally. That is not to deny the possibility that more than one gendarme or policeman can have earnestly endeavored to serve justice and to fulfill his duty according to his conscience and not according to the orders of the Nazis. But that would be his business to prove it. On principle, every police official should to begin with be considered in the same way as a member of the SS.

Additions And Drafts

1. Drafts of T I

a. One handwritten page beginning: "À la personne" and ending: "Administration générale de la SS," dated 26 April 1945. The translation is on page 89.

It is a draft (the original of which is with the LKA) of the beginning of T I. The writing is small and compressed together, to the extent that when Gerstein recopied it with his additions, he used two pages instead of one. Thus we have the explanation for the two pages of T I which are numbered "2;" this error in numbering is followed in the subsequent pages so that the last page, which is the tenth, is numbered "9."

The text of this draft shows a peculiarity which deserves being noted: Gerstein writes of having sent 3,500 anti-Nazi brochures, while in the other versions he writes "8,500" brochures. It should moreover be noted that on the finalized page of T I the 8 of the 8,500 is overwritten.

b. One handwritten page beginning: "ayant passé volontaire et spontané" and ending "avec tous ménagements." (For translation see below). This is a separate text but, in the main, we find here the ideas expressed in the last page number 9 of T I. The original is preserved at LKA.

[It is interesting to note here that Gerstein puts Maidanek in the same context as Belzec and Treblinka, claiming he has seen the gas chambers there and the massacres in all details; whereas in nearly

every version of a final "confession" he clearly states that he saw Maidanek under construction. —R.V.P.]

Transcription and Translation of Text Referred to in 1a.

Bergassessor a.D.¹⁹

Kurt Gerstein

64a Rottweil 26 April 1945

Certified Engineer

(address details)

Personal data: Gerstein, Kurt, associate of the factory of De Limon Fluhme & Co., Dusseldorf, automatic greasing. Before the war, head of department of this firm. Born 11 August 1905 at Munster/Westphalia. — father Ludwig Emil Gerstein, President of the Regional Court, Hagen Westphalia. — mother Clara née Schmemann died 1931. — Married to Elfriede Gerstein née Bensch, Tübingen, Gartenstr. 24. Telephone 3340. Three children Arnulf, 5 years, Adelheid 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ years, Olaf 2 years.

Life: 1905–1910 Munster, 1911–1919 Sarrebruck, 1919–1921 Halberstadt, 1921–1925 Neuruppin, 1925–1931 studies Marburg, Aix-la-Chapelle, Berlin. 1931 Examination for Certified Engineer. — Since 1925, active member of the organized Protestant Youth (Christian Union of Young Men) particularly the Christian student youth, called Bibelkreis (circle around the Holy Bible).

Politics: supporter of Stresemann and Bruning, active for them. Since 1932: responsible position for the whole of Germany in the Protestant student youth. — Since June 1933, pursued by the Gestapo for Christian activity against the State.

2 May 1933 entry into the NSDAP party. — 2 October 1936, expulsion from the NSDAP. 30 January 35, public protest at the theater of the town of Hagen, against the anti-Christian drama Wittekind, beaten up and wounded by the Nazis. — 27 September 1936 chased out of the state service for having sent 3,500 anti-Nazi brochures to the high employees of the state. Put in prison by the Gestapo at Sarrebruck right up till the end of October 36. Mining career finished! — December 1936 right up till the beginning of the war, medical studies at Tübingen, tropic medical institute. — Approx. the third of my income about — $\frac{1}{3}$ of 18,000 — Reichsmark/year, I have given, since 1931, for my ideal religious aims. At my expense, I have had printed approx. 230,000 religious and anti-Nazi brochures to send them, at my expense, to the interested.

14 July–28 August 1938: second imprisonment, then concentration camp of Welzheim up till 23 August 1938.

Bergassessor a. D.
Kurt Gerstein
Diplomingenieur
Fernal Vacha 485
Postfach-Konto Berlin 1140
und Dortmund 9740

68. Rottweil 26 April 1945

~~Merkers (Rhöngebirge), den~~
~~Am Arnsberg 10~~

À la personne: Gerstein, Kurt, participant de
l'usine de Limon Fluhme & Cie, Dusseldorf, gaisage auto-
mutique. Avant la guerre chef de rayon de cette maison.
né le 11 août 1915 à Münster (Westphalie) - père Ludwig Emil Gerstein
Landgerichtspräsident, Hagen Westph. - mère Clara geb. Schmecken
morte 1931. - marié à Elfriede Gerstein née Bernh. Tübingen,
Bartelstr. 64. Telefon 3340. Trois enfants Arnold, Hans, Rüd-
olf 3 1/2 ans Olaf 2 ans.
Vie: 1905-1910 Münster, 1911-1914 Sarrebruck, 1919-1921 Halle (Westph.)
1921-1925 Neuenpyren. 1925-1931 études Harburg, Aix en La Chapelle,
Berlin. 1931 Examen d'ingénieur diplômé. - Depuis 1925 membre
actif de la jeunesse protestantique organisée (Union chrétienne
des jeunes hommes) - ~~participation active~~ de la jeunesse chrétienne c'est-à-dire,
appelée Bible Kreis & cercle autour de la Sainte Bible.
Politique: adhérent de Stresemann et Brüning, actif pour eux.
Depuis 1932: position responsable en toute Allemagne à l'association
de la jeunesse chrétienne protestantique. - Depuis Juin 1933, poursuivi
à la Gestapo pour activités chrétiennes contre l'Etat.
2 mai 1933 entré dans la partie NSDAP. - 2 octobre 1936 exclusion de la
NSDAP.
30 janvier 35 protestation publique au théâtre, de ville d'Hagen contre la
jeunesse anti-chrétienne et l'ille Kird: ~~bourgeois~~ et ~~cléricaux~~ de part et d'autre.
1935 Examen de Bezugsamt. Sans emploi de l'Etat à Sarrebruck.
27 septembre 1936 chargé de l'Etat pour avoir
envoyé 3500 brochures antinacistes aux hautes employées de l'Etat.
Mis en prison par la Gestapo à Sarrebruck jusqu'à fin de l'octobre 36
Carrière militaire finie! - Décembre 1936 ~~commencement de guerre~~
études médicales à Tübingen, institut médical tropique -
Ceci de l'Etat de mes revenus ~~intervient~~ - 1/3 de 18.000,- Reichsmark/jan
j'ai donné, depuis 1931, pour mes ~~bonnes~~ idées religieuses
à mes frais, j'ai fait imprimer ces 230.000 brochures religieuses
et antinacistes, pour les envoyer, à mes frais, à des intermédiaires.
14 juillet - 28 août 1938: deuxième emprisonnement, lors changes
de concentration Wetzlar - jusqu'à 28 août 1938. -
Écoulant des masses des imbéciles etc., totalement choqué
et banni dans mon intérieur, regardant les ces choses une famille,
je n'avais qu'un seul désir: Voir, voir dans cette machine
et alors crier dans tout le peuple. - Avec les références les
deux employés de Gestapo, ayant traité mon cas, il n'était
pas difficile d'entrer dans la ~~1ère~~ 44 armée. 10 m. - 3 juin
1941 entré comme 811 simple soldat à Langenwiesbach, Arnhem
et Osnabrück avec 40 membres. Pour mes ~~bonnes~~ études
- technique et médecine - le 2 juin 41 je reçois l'ordre
d'entrer au service médico-technique. le 28 SS Feldersatz -
Pamplant (Administration générale de la SS).

volontaire et spontané 64 b

Après avoir passé le 22 avril 1945 entre Metzinger
et Reutlingen les lignes Allemands - Français,
je me suis mis à aussitôt à disposition de l'homme
le commandant ^{militaire} de Reutlingen. Chef ^{responsable} de la jeunesse chrétienne
en Allemagne, ^{et aussi par les nazis, pour moi,} plusieurs fois fait prisonnier pour agitation ^{chrétienne} anti-nazie,
une fois même au champ de concentration, exclus
du service de l'état pour la même raison, je
fus lancé ^{de l'épave résistante comme ami personnel H.C.} comme agent dans la SS armée ^{chrétienne}
là, je réussis à une position importante ^{droite} de
SS Filtrung Hauptamt et Reichsamt SS et police
à Berlin, service sanitaire ^{et hygiène}, dont j'étais le
chef du service médico-technique, ^{de 1941}
avril 1945. (arrêté. Ayant vu, comme peu d'autres, ^{novembre}
les chambres de gas ^{de la même} à Belzec et Treblinka. Pologne,
~~étant au service de~~ en tous détails, aussitôt j'ai
révélé toutes ces choses à la légation Suédoise, à la
légation Suisse, et à la résistance nationale Hollan-
daise. J'ai surveillé tout ~~le service sanitaire de la SS~~
et à beaucoup de personnes d'influence en Allemagne.

Monsieur le commandant de Reutlingen, ayant
examiné et vérifié mes ^{militaire} ^{et circonstances} ~~mon~~ a envoyé
à Rothwil pour discuter mon emploi au service
de sécurité de l'armée, surtout au service anti-
werwolf. Il m'avait donné un certificat comme
du grade suivant: Mr. le titulaire n'est pas
un vrai SS et ne doit pas être traité comme
tel, mais, au contraire, avec tous ménagements.

Hearing of the massacres of the imbeciles, *etc.*, totally shocked and wounded in my insides, having such a case in my family, I had only one wish: to see into this machinery and then cry out to all the people. With the references of the two employees of the Gestapo, having treated my case, it was not difficult to enter into the SS Army. 10 March–2 June 1941, studies as a simple soldier at Langenhorn, Arnhem and Oranienburg with 40 doctors. For my double studies — technical and medicine — on 2 June 1941 I received the order to enter into the medico-technical service of the FuehrungsHauptamt (General Administration) of the SS.

Transcription and Translation of Text Referred to in 1b.

Having passed voluntarily and of my own accord on 22 April 1945 the German–French lines between Metzingen and Reutlingen I put myself immediately at the disposition of Monsieur the Military Commandant of the town of Reutlingen. Responsible head of the Christian youth in Germany, beaten up and wounded by the Nazis, pursued, twice made prisoner for Christian anti-Nazi agitation, once in a concentration camp, excluded from the service of the state for the same reason, I was launched as agent for the resistant church, as personal friend of the Rev. Niemöller, in the SS Army. There, I succeeded to an important double position of SS Führungshauptamt and Reichsarzt SS and police at Berlin, sanitary service and of hygiene, of which I was the head of the medico-technical service, from November 1941–April 1945. Having seen, as few others, the gas chambers and the massacres of Belzec, Treblinka and Maidanec/Poland, in all details, straightaway I revealed all these things to the Swedish legation, to the Swiss legation, and the Dutch national resistance and to many persons of influence in Germany.

Monsieur the Military Commandant of Reutlingen, having examined and verified my papers and circumstances, has sent me to Rottweil in order to discuss my employment in the security service of the army, especially in the anti-Werewolf²⁰ service. He had given me a certificate with the following text: Msr. the holder is not a true SS and must not be treated as such, but, on the contrary, with every consideration.”

2. Additions of T II (P5–1553)

a. Note handwritten in French by Gerstein, carrying his signature; it concerns the deliveries of prussic acid. It is not dated.

b. Handwritten note of two pages in English, composed and signed by Gerstein.



7553 P.S. 0-

18

L'acide prussique selon notes ajoutées était
ordonné par le Reichs-Sicherheitshauptamt, Berlin W35,
l'inspécteur, à l'ordre du SS Sturmbannführer
Guenther. Celui-ci, responsable pour ce service,
a fait logiquement ce service pour l'arrivée
l'acide à Oranienburg et l'expédition, faire dispa-
raître les boîtes dans les chambres de désinfection.
Ainsi, il était possible d'empêcher un mauvais
usage de l'acide. Pour empêcher de rappeler
la présence de cet acte - ou, mieux, la
non-présence au Reichs-Sicherheitshaupt-
amt, je n'ai jamais payé ces journaux,
dont l'un des notes était, pour la
même raison, moi-même. Ainsi, il était
possible de faire disparaître aussitôt après
arrivée l'acide. S'il on avait aperçu la non-
présence, j'aurais répondu: c'est un creu-
très de service de désinfection, qui ne
servait et qui ne doit pas être la vraie raison,
ou j'aurais dit: l'acide était devenu inutile,
et il n'était pas encore possible de le garder
plus longtemps.

49365

Lipstein

c. Two invoices of the Degesch Company chosen as examples from a collection of twelve invoices for Zyklon B, six for delivery to Oranienburg and six for delivery to Auschwitz. The dates of these twelve invoices range from 14 February 1944 to 31 May 1944. The total invoiced amounts to 2,370 kgs, of which 1,185 for Oranienburg and 1,185 for Auschwitz. Gerstein says in his “confessions” that he had these invoices written in his name, which is correct, but the address mentioned is that of the Institute of Hygiene (Leipzigerstrasse 31/32 in Berlin) and not the Obersturmführer’s personal address in Berlin.

All of these additions come from the police of Israel, headquarters, 6th Bureau. The originals are preserved in the National Archives in Washington.

The complete documents of PS-1553 (the “confession” proper and the additions) were sent to the American authorities in 1945 by two Allied officers, the Englishman, Major Evans, and the American Haught, who interrogated Gerstein at the Hotel Mohren at Rottweil on 5 May 1945.

Translation of document referred to in 2a. above, which is signed but not dated.

“The prussic acid according to the attached invoices was ordered by the *Reichssicherheitshauptamt*, Berlin W, 35 Kurfürstenstrasse on the instructions of SS *Sturmbannführer* Guenther: I, responsible for this work, loyally performed this service in order to, the acid having arrived at Oranienburg and Auschwitz, make the tins disappear into the disinfection chambers. In this way, it was possible to prevent a bad usage of the acid. To prevent reminding anyone of the presence of this stock—or, better, its “non-presence”—to the *Reichssicherheitshauptamt*, I have never paid these supplies, the address on the invoices was, for the same purpose, myself. In this way it was possible to get rid of the acid immediately on arrival. If someone had noticed its non-presence, I would have replied: this is a mistake of the disinfection service who did not know and should not have known its real use, or I would have said: the acid had decomposed and it was no longer possible to keep it anymore.” (signed) Gerstein.

Transcription of document referred to in 2b. above as follows:

Domicil Permanent: Tübingen – Neckar, Gartenstr. 24. 26 April 1945. My report is interesting to the Secret Service. The things I have seen, no more than 4–5 others have seen, and these others were Nazis. Many of responsables of Belsen, Buchenwald, Maidanek, Oswice



Bergsässer & B.
urt Gerzeln
Diplomingenieur

4553 P.S. Domicile permanent: 13
Trebingen-Neckar. Gastkarte 24 2. April 1945

My ~~report~~ is interesting for best service.
The things, I have seen, no more than
4-5 others have seen, and these others
were Nazis. Many of responsible of
Belzen, Beckenwald, Maidanek, Orsica,
Hankhausen, Dachen etc. were seen of
my service, daily I have seen them
in my double position in:

- 1) SS Trebingen - Hauptmann, Deputy-SS.
- and 2) Reichswehr SS and Polizei, Berlin.

I am in position to say the names
and crimes of in particular responsible
of this things, and I am ready to give
the material for his accusation in Court
Tribunal.

My self, combat friend of recent Mar-
lin Kienicker and his family (now at
Lienz / Steiermark / (Bavaria)). I was after
2 priors and conversation - camp agent of
for "correspondent" - "Junk" SS - Blocken-
führer and compartment - chief in
SS - Führungsausschuss and of Reichswehr SS
and Polizei, a dangerous position!

The things I have seen ~~recently~~
has seen 1943, things, I have made
my report to the German legation in

19366



155365

14

Berlin. I am ready and in
situation to say all my
observations to your secret-
service.

The secretary of Swedish
Legation Berlin, now at Stockholm
Baron von Otter is ready to
be witness of my relations of
1942 of all this country. I propose
to demand me for this information.

Reference: Mr. Nicomello
(remand Martin Nicomello's women
Leoni / Siambiger See
(München
Austria).

Note: Your army has not find
Mr. Nicomello
Mr. Götlin junior
Mr. Skubberg
at Berlin.

They are deported, nobody
now, who they are.

Please do not publish
my report before examination
now: Nicomello is liberated
or dead.

Leoni

E19367

-L/M

(Auschwitz), Mauthausen, Dachau, *etc.* were men of my service, daily I have seen them in my double position in: 1) SS Führungshauptamt, D, sanitary service, and 2) Reichsarzt SS and Polizei, Berlin.

I am in situation to say the names and crimes of in reality those responsables of this things, and I am ready to give the material for his accusation in World Tribunal? Myself, cordial friend of Reverend Martin Niemöller and his family (now at Leoni/Starnbergersee/Bavaria!) — I was after two prisons and concentration camp agent of the confessional-Church — like SS Obersturmführer and compartment-chief in SS Führungshauptamt and of Reichsarzt SS and Polizei, a dangerous position!

The things I have seen nobody has seen. 1943, August, I have made my reports [here written over word “regards”] for the Svenska legation in Berlin. I am ready and in situation to say all my observations to your Secret Service.

The secretary of the Svenska Legation Berlin, now at Stockholm, Baron von Otter is ready to be witness my relations of 1942 of all these cruelties. I propose to demand this information:

Reference: Msr. Niemöller (Reverend Martin Niemöller’s woman, Leoni/Starnberger See, München [illegible word]). (signed) Gerstein.

Notes: Your army has not find Mr. Niemöller, Mr. Stalin junior, Mr. Schushnigg, at Dachau. They are deported, nobody now; who they are.²¹

Please do not publish my report before exactement now: Niemöller is liberated or dead. Gerstein.

Translation of Degesch Invoice of 14 February 1944

The invoice is overwritten/overstamped with various file and service references which were added subsequently and do not form part of the original document.

Translation

Degesch (Emblem)

German Pest Control Co., Inc.

Frankfurt-on-Main (Address and Phone numbers, *etc.*)

Herr Obersturmführer

Kurt Gerstein

Berlin,

Leipziger Strasse 31/32

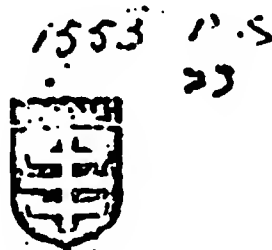
Invoice

Frankfurt a.M. 14 February 1944

D.G.1. We have dispatched to you today by the train from Dessau with a consignment note of the Armed Forces issued by the local Army Administration at Dessau for the concentration camp of Auschwitz, Dept. Destruction of Parasites and Disinfection, Station: Auschwitz, an urgent merchandise, the following consignment: Zyklon B Prussic



DEGESCH
DEUTSCHE GESELLSCHAFT FÜR
SCHÄDLINGSBEKÄMPFUNG MB.H.
FRANKFURT/M.



WEISSFRAUENSTR. 9 FEINSTR. 20121 / FERNRUF. 23546 / NACHTRUF. 24141 / DRAHTWORT. DEGESCH
POSTANSCHRIFT: DEGESCH FRANKFURT/M., SONNENSTR. 248 POSTSCHECK. 844 FRANKFURT/M. TELEGRAMME. AIE CODES

Herrn Obersturmführer
Kurt Gerstein
B e r l i n
Leipziger Str. 31/32.

RECHNUNG

Frankfurt a. M., den 14. Februar 1944
E.

D. G. S.		Einzelpreis	Reichsmark
	<p>Wir bundten heute mit der Bahn ab Dessau mit einem Wehrmachtfrachtbrief der Heeres- standortverwaltung Dessau an das Konzen- trationslager A u s o h w i t z, Abt. Entwesung und Entschuchung, Station: A u s o h w i t z, als Kilgut folgende Sendung:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Z Y K L O N B Blausäure ohne Reizstoff</p>		
50066/ 78	<p>= 13 Kisten, enthaltend je: 30 = 390 Buchsen à 500 g = 195 kg CN -----</p>	5.--	975.--
	<p>Brutto: 832 kg Tara: 276,25 kg Netto: 555,75 kg</p>		
	<p>Die Stiketten tragen den Vermerk: " Vorsicht; ohne Warnstoff "</p> <p style="text-align: center;">2 49376</p>		

POLICE D'ISRAEL
QUARTIER GENERAL 6-ème BUREAU



משרד המשטרה
מחלקת חירום

105

DEGESCH
DEUTSCHE GESELLSCHAFT FÜR
SCHÄDLINGSBEKÄMPFUNG M.B.H.
FRANKFURT/M.

neue Anschrift
DEGESCH
Friedberg/Hessen
Kaisersstr. 70. Postfach 80



1553-PS

36

WEISSFRAUENSTR. 9 / FERNSPRECHER: CRISSUF 20121 / FERNRUF: 4546 / NACHTRUF: 24141 / ERANTWORT: DEGESCH
POSTANSCHRIFT: DEGESCH FRANKFURT/M., SONNENFACH 2/3 POSTLEISTUNG: 20 FRANKFURT/M. TELEGRAMME: AILE CODES

Herrn Obersturnführer
Kurt Goretzke

RECHNUNG

8/30

(1) Berlin

No. 1

Loipeigerstr. 32/32

Frankfurt a. M., den 31. Mai 1944

O. G. S.	Wir sandten am 26. Mai 44 Dessenau mit einem Hochdruckvernebler der Standortverwaltung Dessenau an das Kon- zentrationsslager Oranienburg, Abteilung Entwesung und Entsauchung.	Einzelheiten	Rechnung
Station: Oranienburg	als Prochtgut folgende Sendung		
50198/	ZYKLON B Bleisäure		
210 = 13 Kisten, enthaltend 10	50 = 590 Büchsen à 500 g = 195 kg OF	5.--	975. --
	Brutto: 832,00 kg Tara: 276,25 " Netto: 555,75 "		
	Die Etiketten tragen den Vermerk: "Vorsicht, ohne Farnstoff"		

649378

acid non-lachrymatory.²² 50066/78 = 13 cases each containing 30 = 390 tins of 500 grammes = 195 kgs. 5.— 975.— Gross: 832 kgs. Tare: 276.25 kgs. Net: 555.75 kgs. The labels carry the wording: “With Care, without warning properties.”

3 A separate handwritten text, in English, of one page, beginning with: “This relation is intéressant” and ending with “Reichsarzt SS und Polizei.”

While obviously in Gerstein’s handwriting, it is not dated or signed. The original is preserved by LKA (Bestand 5,2 – Nr 64c). One finds again in this text certain ideas expressed in the note of two pages, also in English, shown as additions to T II in 2b. above.

Transcription of handwritten note in English referred to in 3 above, as follows:

“This relation is intéressant for Secret Service. The things I have seen no more than 4–5 men have seen, and the others were nazies. Many of responsables of Belsen, Buchenwald, Maidanek were men of my service: “SS Fuehrungs–Hauptamt D, Sanitary-services and Reichsarzt SS and Polizei.” I am in situation to say the names of in reality responsables of this things and I am ready to give the material for this accusation in world-tribunal. My-self, I was, after 2 prisons and concentration-camp, friend of reverend Martin Niemöller, agent for confessional-church in SS-administration (SS Fuehrungshauptamt, D, sanitary-service and Reichsarzt und Polizei).

4 One typewritten page, in French and headed “Post-Scriptum,” carrying the number “16.”

It is undated and unsigned. It begins with: “À Belcec, il était très terrible” and ends with: “furent assassinés.” One can assume that there were fifteen pages before this sixteenth page. But only this page 16 is in the archives of LKA.

The ideas expressed in this text are comparable to those found in certain supplements (Ergänzungen) of T III and T IV.

Translation of the page 16 in French referred to above, as follows: “Post Scriptum: –16–

“At Belcec it was very terrible the competition that was made among the men and boys at the transport of clothes. I still think of a little Jewish boy of 3, 4 years, who had to share out the small strings

This relation is interesting for
 Secret Service. The things I have
 seen no more than 4-5 men
 have seen, and the others were
 Nazis. Many of responsible
 of Belsen, Buchenwald, Maidanek
 were men of my service:

SS Fuehrungs-Hauptamt

D, Sanitary-services

and Reichsart SS and Polizei

I am in situation to say the
 names of in reality responsible
 of this things and I am ready to
 give the material for his accusation
 in world-tribunal.

My-self, I was, after 2 prisons and
 concentration-camp, friend of reverend
 Martin Niemöller, agent for confessi-
 onal-church in SS-administration
 (SS Fuehrungshauptamt, D, Sanitary-service
 and Reichsart SS and Polizei

- 16 -

A Belzec il était très terrible la concurrence qu'on faisait parmi les hommes et garçons au transport des vêtements. - Je pense encore au petit garçon juif de 3, 4 ans, qui devait partager, les ficeles pour joindre les chaussures : Même tel enfant fut abusé sans savoir à cette machine terrible d'assassinat de Hitler et Wirth. Ou je pense à une petite fille de 5 ans qui oubliait - totalement nu - une petite chaîne de corail, que quelque minutes plus tard - 1 mètre avant les chambres de gaz - trouva un garçon de 3 ans : se réjouissant, contemplait et - au prochain moment - fut lancé dans la chambre. - Obermeyer me raconta : à un village auprès d'ici j'ai trouvé un juif de ma ville paternelle, de Firmasens. Au guerre de 14-18 il était sergent, un homme très honorable. Enfants, nous avons joué ensemble. Il m'a sauvé une fois la vie, m'écartant au danger d'être surpris. Cet homme et sa femme je prendrai avec moi pour mon commando travailleur! - Demandé, ce qu'il ferait d'après de ces hommes, il ne dit, totalement étonné : Qu'est-ce que deviendra de lui? Le même que tous les autres, dans telles choses il n'y a pas quelque autre manière - mais - peut être - je les ferai fusiler! -

Mais j'ai aussi trouvé quelques SS, devenus par ces méthodes des adversaires vives de ce régime : SS-Hauptsturmführer Heinrich Hollaender du Reichsarzt SS et de police, qui me donnait science de toutes choses extraordinaires et intéressantes. - Moi même, j'étais disparu dans les chambres de gaz, si Hollaender ne m'avait pas gardé souvent des choses dangereuses. - Antinazi aussi : SS-Sturmabführer Dr.med.Focht, chef de rayon intérieur de SS-Lazarett Berlin-Lichterfelde, Dr.med.Nissen, SS-Hauptsturmführer, Itzehoe Hollstein Dr.med.chief, Sorge de Jéna, --

Officiers, qu'on peut garder comme ceux du 20 juillet 1944 : SS-Grupenführer Dr.pharm.Blumenreuther, chef du rayon pharmacien de police et SS

SS-Sturmabführer Dr.pharm.Behnenburg, du même service, SS-Sturmabführer Dr.pharm.Rudolphi, " " " " " "

Le dernier a ruiné aux pieds, octobre 1944, le Hitler-Bild, 2/3 de la SS hollandaise, belge etc étaient forcés dans ce service par méthodes frauduleuses et violentes. De même une grande partie des jeunes gens de la HITLERJUGEND sont forcés à ce service, de même les commandés de sérieuse et de la marine. - Souvent, les agents de la police étaient beaucoup plus mauvais comme les SS. Il étaient coupables en grand nombre des enlèvements des juifs, qui, quelque temps plus tard, furent assassinés.

to tie up the shoes: even such a child was abused without knowing of this terrible murder machine of Hitler and Wirth. — Or I think of a little girl of 5 years who forgot — totally naked — a little chain of coral that some minutes later — 1 meter before the gas chambers — was found by a boy of 3 years: rejoicing, contemplating and — at the next moment — was thrown into the chamber. — Obermeyer told me: at a village near here I found a Jew from my home town, from Pirmasens. In the war of 14–18 he was a sergeant, a very honorable man. As children, we played together. He even saved my life once, I being in danger of being run over. This man and his wife I will take with me for my work detail! — Asked, what he would do afterwards with these people, he says to me, totally surprised: What will become of them? The same as all the others, in such things there is no other way — but perhaps I shall have them shot! —

But I have also found some SS, become by those methods active adversaries of the regime: SS *Hauptscharführer* Heinrich Holländer of the Reichsarzt SS and of the police who let me know of everything extraordinary and interesting. — Myself, I'd have gone into the gas chambers, if Holländer had not often protected me from the dangerous things. — Anti-Nazi also: SS-*Sturmbannführer* Dr. med. Focht, head of the interior department of SS-Lazarett²³ Berlin-Lichterfelde; Dr. med. Nissen, SS-*Hauptsturmführer*, Itzehoe Hollstein; Dr. med. surg. Sorge of Jena, — Officers, that one can keep as those of 20 July 1944: SS-*Gruppenführer* Dr. pharm. Blumenreuther, head of the pharmaceutical department of police and SS; SS-*Sturbannführer* Dr. pharm. Behmenburg, of the same service; SS-*Sturmbannführer* Dr. pharm. Rudolphi, of the same service. The last ruined with his feet, October 1944, the Hitler picture.

²/₃ of the Dutch SS, Belgian, *etc.*, were forced into the service by fraudulent and violent methods. In the same way a large part of the young people of the Hitlerjugend are forced into this service, similarly the ones ordered of the air and of the navy. — Often, the agents of the police were very much worse than the SS. They were guilty of large numbers of imprisonments of Jews, who, some time later, were assassinated.”

Letter from Gerstein to His Wife

Dated 26 May 1945.

It is handwritten, on five half pages. The photocopy and the typewritten transcription were sent to us at our request by Gerstein's widow. The most important sentence seems to be the following: “Wenn Du irgendwelche Schwierigkeiten hast, geh mit dem Bericht, den ich anlege, zum Militärgouverneur,” which means: “If you have

11. Jule Frische:
Nach 5 Jahren Aufenthalt in Kothornit der bayerischen
Militärverwaltung war ich heute mit dem Wagen
an eine übergrasende Stelle in der Gegend von
Landsberg - wo wirs ist nicht weit gegeben.
Ich hatte hier ein Hotel immer als stufen-
förmig zu nennen - bekommen, welches ich
1 Stock und 1 Kuchentisch im Kuppel gehalten
worden war und 2 Züge - Eingangs v. 2000
Lohn - 11 bis 12 auf den Vorraum im
Pier gab es 24 meine Papire zurück,
da bin ich nicht beirrt. Ich gebe bei dem
einen Rat: Welter! Ich bin nicht ge-
fallen. Es ist selbstverständlich, dass jemand

wie ich - wie wir - anders behandelt
werden müssen, wie andere Leute. Meine
Tätigkeit im SSFHA war von einem
keinem eine reine ständige Tätigkeit
für die Bekanntheit. Die Zeit
unseres wenigsten Jages. Können, weil
man ist in der Zeit sehr groß
und ausgebreitete Leute. Ich habe
in SS in Kothornit gewesen - 21.
Wenn es jemand hätte, der ist
meine Welt alles - ich habe
keine Schwierigkeiten.

Komm bei d'jedenen vorbei,
setz mit dem Bild, das da
ist, zum Stillstehen. Da
wird die Aufstellung, die da steht,
noch mehr gut. Aber das liegt
vor, gib's aber nicht aus der Hand.

Lieder! Kann auch Böse-
 re. v. ~~Wenig~~, Juppelbasse,
 Lieder! Kann auch Böse-
 re. v. ~~Wenig~~, Juppelbasse,
 Lieder! Kann auch Böse-
 re. v. ~~Wenig~~, Juppelbasse,

ist wohl nicht. Apurica alle Beiden
 fock — und Loffe und beide wackel-
 heraus. Ich mit der Koffe
 und Lohbr — im Stoben
 in. Holweil, Tam. Miller — Lalle
 ist glück. Aber ist kam — da man
 ist für meinen Fall so hoch in-
 teressiert und da ist als eine der
 Vorgezogene — die Kringsostrich-
 in der Intervention. Grillof

950

5) aufpassen über, nicht auch mal
sagen.

bei, bei dem Vater und dem
Kinder Verstärkung für den
Winter

11/11

26. V. 45-10⁵⁸

11/11

Abschrift des handschriftlichen letzten Briefes meines Mannes
Kurt Gerstein vom 26. V. 1945, an mich.

Liebe Friedel!

Nach 5 Wochen Aufenthalt in Rottweil zur Verfügung des Militär-gouverneurs werde ich heute mit dem Wagen an eine übergeordnete Stelle in der Gegend von Konstanz - wo weiss ich nicht ! - weiter gegeben. Ich hatte hier ein Hôtelzimmer als Aufenthalt zugewiesen bekommen, nachdem ich 1 Nacht und 1 Nachmittag im Käfig gehalten worden war und hiergegen Einspruch erhoben hatte. - Ich liess Dir auf der Kommode im Flur Gartenstr. 24 meine Papiere zurück, da Du sie sicher brauchst. Ich gebe Dir den einen Rat: Wehr Dich ! Lass Dir nichts gefallen. Es ist selbstverständlich, dass jemand wie ich - wie wir - anders behandelt werden müssen, wie andere Leute. Meine Tätigkeit im SSFHA usw. war von vornherein eine reine Agententätigkeit für die Bekenntniskirche. Ich habe Dir nur das wenigste sagen können, weil man Dich im Ernstfall erpresst und ausgequetscht hätte. Mich würde der SD in kochendes Wasser geworfen haben, wenn er gewusst hätte, dass ich in meiner Not alles den Schweden und der Schweiz verraten habe.

Wenn Du irgendwelche Schwierigkeiten hast, geh mit dem Bericht den ich anlege, zum Militärgouverneur. Verwahr die Haftbefehle, Parteiausschluss-Urkunden usw. gut. Auch das leg vor, gib's aber nicht aus der Hand.

Vielleicht kann auch Fräulein Dr.v.Huene, Zeppelinstrasse, Dir manches helfen. Auch zum Bürgermeister rate ich Dir zu gehen - Wann ich zurückkomme, weiss ich noch nicht. Ich geniesse alle Freiheiten bisher und hoffe auch bei der nächsten Instanz. Auch mit der Verpflegung und Unterbringung - im Mohren ~~xxx~~ in Rottweil, Fam. Miller - hatte ich Glück. Aber ich kann, da man sich für meinen Fall sehr stark interessiert und da ich als einer der Hauptzeugen gegen die Kriegsverbrecher vor dem Internationalen Gerichtshof aufzutreten habe, noch nichts näheres sagen.

Dir, Deinem Vater und den Kindern
herzliche Grüsse und Wünsche

K u r t .

26.V.45 1058

difficulties of any sort, go with the report, which I attach, to the Military Governor." In the following chapters, we shall try to determine to which "confession" Gerstein refers in speaking of the "Bericht" attached to his letter.

Translation of Gerstein's Last Letter To His Wife of 26 May 1945

"Dear Friedel,

After a stay of five weeks at Rottweil at the disposition of the military governor, I am being sent today by car to a higher authority in the region of Konstanz— where, I do not know! I had received here a hotel room as assigned residence, after I had been held under lock and key for one night and one afternoon, and had protested against this. — I left my papers for you on the chest of drawers in the vestibule of 24 Gartenstrasse, for you certainly need them. I give you a piece of advice: defend yourself! Let nothing happen to you. It is self-evident that someone like me — like us — must be treated differently from other people. My activity as the SS F.H. *etc.* was from the beginning a pure activity as agent in the service of the confessional church. I could tell you only the minimum, because, if things turned out badly, they would have been able to blackmail you and to press you with questions. As for me, the SD would have plunged me in boiling water if it had known that, in my distress, I divulged everything to Sweden and to Switzerland.

If you have difficulties of any sort, go with the report, which I attach, to the Military Governor. Take good care of the warrants for arrest, the documents relating to expulsion from the party, *etc.* Present those documents also, but do not part with them.

Perhaps Fräulein Dr. v. Huene, Zeppelinstrasse, can help you in some way. I advise you also to go and see the Mayor. — When I shall return, I do not yet know. Up till now I enjoy every freedom and I hope it will be the same in the next jurisdiction. Also with the food and lodging, with the Miller family at Mohren in Rottweil, I had luck. But since everyone is very strongly interested in my case and as I have to appear before the international court of justice as one of the principal witnesses against the war criminals, I cannot yet say anything more definite.

To you, your father and the children, heartfelt greetings and wishes, Kurt. 26.V.45. 10⁵⁸.

Interrogations by the French Military Justice Department

It appears appropriate to include two interrogations by the French Military Justice Department within the complete collection of documents left by Gerstein; all the more so as, in their case, we have every guarantee of authenticity.

1 Interrogation of 26 June 1945

Interrogating officer of the O.R.C.G.: Commandant Beckhardt. It consists of two sheets, typewritten front and back, numbered 1 to 4.

The original is preserved in the Gerstein file at the Directorate of Military Justice at Paris.

Photocopies of interrogation referred to in 1) above.

Translation into English of above, as follows: Paris, the 26 June 1945.

INTERROGATION of Mr. Kurt GERSTEIN by Commandant Beckhardt Interrogating officer of the O.R.C.G. 48 rue de Villejust—Paris.)

I – Interrogation of Identity NAME: GERSTEIN. Forenames: Kurt—. Born: 11 August 1905 at Münster (Westphalia) – Son of: Ludwig E. GERSTEIN (President of the Court of Justice (retired) and of Clara SCHMEMANN, deceased in 1931.) Married on 31 August 1937 to Elfriede née Bensch. Domicile: 24 Gartenstrasse at Tübingen. 3 children: Arnulf born 25/9/39; Adelheid born 25/10/41; Olaf born December 1942; Nationality: German. Religion: Confessional Protestantism – Lutheran.

II – Professional Education. In 1919, I go into the mines of Lintfors, near Aix-en-Chapelle, as apprentice worker, until 1925, after having been, previously, secondary-school student at Sarrebrück from 1915 to 1919. In 1925, I finish my studies and pass my baccalaureate.

In 1931, after having followed various courses I become certificated engineer for the mines service.

III – Political and Religious activities. From 1922 to 1933, I am a republican and active supporter of BRUENING and STRESEMAN.

In 1933, 30 January 1935 and 27 September, 1936, I am arrested and manhandled by the Gestapo for anti-national-socialist propaganda and Christian activity. Following this, I was debarred from the State Mining Service.

The 14/7/38, I am arrested by the Gestapo and the S.D. of Stuttgart; I was interned in prison then at the concentration camp of Walzheim.

I received a prohibition on making speeches.

In 1940, through the Bishop of Stuttgart, I learned of the massive

PARIS, le 26 juin 1945

INTERROGATOIRE de Monsieur Kurt GERSTEIN

par le Commandant BECKHARDT

(Officier Interrogateur de l'O.R.C.G.)
48, rue de Villejust - PARIS

I - Interrogatoire d'identité

NOM : GERSTEIN

Prénoms : Kurt

Né le : 11 août 1905 à Münster (Westphalie)

Fils de : Ludwig E. GERSTEIN (Président de la Cour de Justice en retraite) et de Clara SCHMEMANN décédée en 1931

Marié le 31 août 1937 avec Elfriede née A. Bensch

Domicile : 24 Gartenstrasse à Tübingen

3 enfants : Arnulf né le 25/9/39

Adelheid née le 25/10/41

Olaf né en décembre 1942

Nationalité : allemande

Religion : protestantisme confessionnel - luthérien -

II - Formation professionnelle

En 1919, je rentre comme apprenti ouvrier aux Mines de Lintfort près d'Aix-la-Chapelle, jusqu'en 1925, après avoir, au préalable, été lycéen à Sarrebrück de 1915 à 1919. En 1925, je termine mes études et passe mon baccalauréat.

En 1931, après avoir suivi différents stages je deviens ingénieur diplômé du Service des Mines

III - Activités politique et religieuse

De 1922 à 1933, je suis républicain et partisan actif de BRUENING et STRESEMANN.

En 1933, le 30 janvier 1935 et le 27 septembre 1938, je suis arrêté et malmené par la Gestapo pour propagande anti-nationale-socialiste et activité chrétienne. Par suite, je fus exclus du Service des Mines de l'Etat.

J'étudiais alors la médecine tropicale à Tübingen à l'Institut protestant de Tübingen.

Le 14/7/38, je suis arrêté par la Gestapo et le S.D. de Stuttgart; je fus interné en prison puis au camp de concentration de Welzheim.

Je reçus l'interdiction de prononcer des discours.

En 1940, par l'intermédiaire de l'évêque de Stuttgart, j'appris l'assassinat massif d'aliénés à Hadamar et Grafeneck. Ma belle-sœur, Bertha EBLENING figurait parmi les victimes. C'est alors que je pris la décision d'entrer aux Waffen SS.

IV - Activité dans les Services Nationaux-Socialistes

D - Etes-vous rentré aux Waffen SS pour espionner et servir votre idéal religieux ?

[Signature]

[Signature]

R - Oui, pour mener une lutte active et mieux connaître les buts nationaux-socialistes et leurs secrets

D - Comment avez-vous pu rentrer dans cette organisation après avoir été vous-même arrêté plusieurs fois par la Gestapo ?

R - Je n'ai fait qu'accepter la proposition que des subalternes de la Gestapo m'avaient faite, lors de ma deuxième arrestation

D - A quelle date avez-vous été tatoué du signe distinctif des Waffen SS ?

R - En mai 1941, je fus tatoué du signe AB correspondant à la 4^e catégorie sanguine.

D - Quelle formation vos chefs SS vous ont-ils donnée

R - Je suivis des cours spéciaux pour médecins à Hambourg, Langenhorn, Arnhem et à Oranienburg; le 9 novembre 1941, je fus nommé sous-lieutenant SS, service d'hygiène. Un an après, ayant amélioré les installations sanitaires des camps de prisonniers et des camps de concentration, je fus nommé lieutenant SS.

D - Quelles ont été vos activités depuis février 1942 jusqu'au 21 avril 1945, date à laquelle vous vous êtes constitué prisonnier de l'Armée Française ?

R - Le 8 juin 1942, le SS Sturmbannführer GUNTHER du RSHA me donne l'ordre de transporter 260 kgs ~~de cyanure de potassium~~ de cyanure de potassium à Kollin près de Prague. Le SS Sturmbannführer Professeur-Docteur PFANNENSTIEL ...

D - Connaissez-vous l'adresse du Dr en Allemagne ?

R - Oui, Marburg (Lahn) Rottenberg 1

... Je connaissais le projet d'utilisation de cyanure et étais décidé 1^{er} à essayer d'en faire disparaître, 2^e de faire savoir aux ouvriers qui le fabriquaient que ce produit était destiné à tuer des êtres humains.

A Lublin, je suis reçu par le SS Gruppenführer GLOBOCNEC Général Waffen SS (fait prisonnier par les Américains à Trieste) Il me mit au courant de l'organisation

1^{re} : à Belzec, entre Lublin et Lemberg
exécutions quotidiennes : 15.000

2^e : Sobibor près de Lublin en Pologne (20.000 par jour)

3^e : Treblinka en Pologne (25.000 par jour)

Ces trois installations fonctionnent respectivement depuis les mois d'avril, juin et mai 1942.

4^e : Maidanek près de Lublin, encore en préparation

D - A votre connaissance, quelles étaient les nationalités et races des victimes ?

R - Pour la plupart des Juifs, des Polonais et des Tchèques.

... Les victimes étaient asphyxiées au moyen d'un moteur Diesel à échappement toxique (oxyde et gaz carbonique) dans les quatre installations précitées.

Wurgen.

23.1.

D - Combien de temps êtes-vous resté dans ces camps et en avez-vous visité d'autres ?

R - Seulement trois jours, puis l'on me conduisit à Lublin où le SS Hauptsturmführer OBERMEYER (originaire de Pirmasens) me fit visiter l'installation. J'assiste à l'arrivée d'un convoi : 45 wagons contenant 6.700 personnes dont 1450 mortes au cours du voyage. Les victimes sont entièrement dépouillées de leurs effets. Les cheveux sont coupés et récupérés dans des sacs de jute. Deux ou trois heures après, ils étaient tous exécutés

D - Avez-vous été appelé à prendre une part indirecte à ces massacres ? Les SS se sont-ils contentés de faire de vous un simple spectateur ?

R - Je n'ai aucune vie humaine sur la conscience, mon travail consistait exclusivement dans des installations sanitaires en vue d'éviter des épidémies contre des maladies. J'étais chargé également de rendre l'eau potable et en étais responsable auprès des SS et de la Police

D - Avez-vous eu des contacts avec les organisations de résistance allemandes ou autres ?

R - Oui, j'étais chef de la résistance protestante, en liaison avec la résistance hollandaise et avec les légations de Suède et de Suisse.

D - Pouvez-vous le prouver, et avec quelles personnes étiez-vous en relation ?

R - Pour la résistance protestante, je recevais des consignes du Pasteur NIEMOELLER (détenu à Dachau depuis 1937) par l'intermédiaire de sa famille et des religieuses.

Avec la résistance hollandaise, depuis 1941, par l'intermédiaire UBBINK originaire de DOESBOURG (Ingénieur - propriétaire d'un fonderie)

Avec la résistance de Suède, par la Légation de Suède de Berlin, M. Baron de OTTER

Avec la résistance suisse, par la Légation suisse de Berlin Docteur HOCHSTRASSER

En 1942, je faisais la connaissance d'un restaurateur français, au carrefour Strasbourg-St-Denis, Restaurant "Louis XIV" à qui j'exprimais mon dégoût des bagnes et des assassinats

D - Connaissiez-vous d'autres agents ou officiers de Gestapo ou du S.D. qui aient eu une responsabilité importante dans l'organisation des camps et des exécutions.

R - Un certain GÜNTHER et son chef EICHMANN tous deux chargés de l'anéantissement de la race juive. GÜNTHER est le fils de l'écrivain raciste connu.

Le Docteur GUNDNACH, Hauptsturmführer, originaire de Berlin s'est livré à des études médicales sur des êtres vivants.

Le SS Sturmbannführer HALLER de la Police de Bromberg, se trouvait vers la fin des hostilités à Degginglen, se serait occupé tout particulièrement de la fusillade des enfants juifs

Le Dr Sturmbannführer GROSS, demeurant à Berlin, s'est livré sur des êtres vivants, à des études pour le cancer

Le Dr GRAWITZ qui travaillait à Berlin, né à l'est de l'Elbe (Pommern) Chef de la Croix-Rouge allemande mais en même temps SS, Obergruppenführer, responsable de la direction des bagnes.

W. G. G.

G. J. L.

Q - Quels sont les noms des chefs de camps que vous avez connus

R - A ^{Frankfurt} ~~Frankfurt~~burg, le Sturmbannführer KEINDEL, un pur nazi, responsable de nombreuses atrocités. Il est autrichien ou bavarois

D - Connaissez-vous encore d'autres criminels de guerre ?

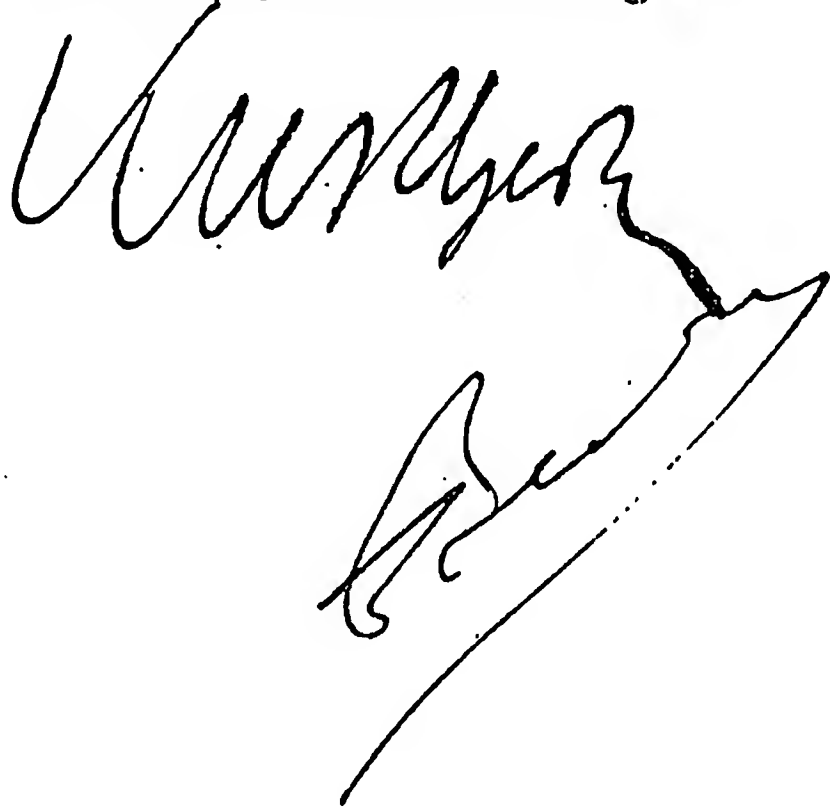
R - Oui, le SS Gruppenführer, Dr. Ing. KAMMLER, originaire de Berlin, Chef de l'armement, responsable de traitements des déportés employés pour travailler sous terre

Le SS Sturmbannführer FICK qui a la responsabilité de l'attaque contre les institutions religieuses de Sennheim (Alsace)

Le SS Sturmbannführer TONDOFF, engagé dans les SS depuis leur formation.

Le SS Untersturmführer, Dr. Wolfgang STICHEL, chargé de la répression des anti-nazis; a décapité un professeur de l'université de Berlin - originaire de Berlin

Lecture faite, persiste et signe

A large, stylized handwritten signature, possibly reading 'W. Kammeler', followed by a long, sweeping horizontal flourish.

killings of the insane at Hadamar and Grafeneck. My sister-in-law, Bertha EBLENING, was among the victims. It was then that I took the decision to enter the *Waffen SS*.

IV – Activity in the National Socialist Services.

Q Did you join the *Waffen SS* in order to spy and serve religious ideals?

A Yes, to conduct an active struggle and to know the National-Socialist objectives and their secrets better.

Q How were you able to join this organisation after having been yourself arrested several times by the Gestapo?

A I did nothing but accept the suggestion that the subalterns of the Gestapo had made me, at the time of my second arrest.

Q At what date were you tattooed with the distinctive sign of the *Waffen SS*?

A In May 1941, I was tattooed with the mark AB corresponding to the 4th. blood category.

Q What training did your chiefs in the SS give you?

A I followed the special courses for doctors at Hamburg, Langenhoorn, and at Oranienburg; on 9 November 1941, I was graded sublieutenant SS, hygiene service. One year after, having improved the sanitary installations of the prisoners' camps and concentration camps, I was graded lieutenant SS.

Q What have been your activities since February 1942 until 21 April 1945, on which date you surrendered as a prisoner of the French army?

A On 8 June 1942, the SS *Sturmbannführer* GÜNTHER of RSHA gives me the order to transport 260 kgs of cyanide of potassium to Kollin near Prague. The SS *Sturmbannführer* Professor-Doctor PFANNENSTIEL

Q Do you know the address of the Dr in Germany?

A Yes, Marburg (Lahn) Rottenberg 1.

. . . I knew the project for utilisation of cyanide and was determined 1. to try and do away with it, 2. to make known to the workers who manufactured it that this product was intended to kill human beings.

At Lublin, I was received by the SS *Gruppenführer* GLOBOCNEK, *Waffen SS* General (made prisoner by the Americans at Trieste). He briefed me as to the organization.

1: At Belzec, between Lublin and Lemberg daily executions: 15,000.

2: Sobibor near Lublin in Poland (20,000 per day).

3: Treblinka in Poland (25,000 per day).

These three installations were functioning respectively from the months of April, June, and May 1942.

4: Maidanek, near Lublin, still in preparation.

Q To your knowledge, what were the nationalities and races of the victims?

A For the majority, Jews, Poles, and Czechs.

. . . the victims were asphyxiated by means of a diesel engine with toxic exhausts (oxide and carbonic gas) in the four installations previously mentioned.

Q How long did you stay in these camps and did you visit others?

A Only three days, then I was driven to Lublin, where the SS *Hauptsturmführer* OBERMEYER (native of Pirmasens) had me inspect the installation. I am present at the arrival of a convoy: 45 wagons containing 6,700 persons of which 1,450 dead in the course of the journey. The victims are completely stripped of their things. Their hair is cut and retrieved in jute sacks. Two or three hours afterwards, they are all executed.

Q Were you called on to take an indirect part in these massacres? Were the SS satisfied to make a simple spectator of you?

A I have not one human life on my conscience, my work consisted exclusively in the sanitary installations with a view to avoiding epidemics against diseases (sic). I was responsible also for making the water drinkable and I was responsible for this to the SS and to the Police.

Q Have you had contacts with the German resistance organizations or others?

A Yes, I was head of the protestant resistance, in liaison with the Dutch resistance, and with the legations of Sweden and of Switzerland.

Q Can you prove that, and with which persons you were in contact?

A For the protestant resistance, I received instructions from Pastor NIEMÖLLER (detained at Dachau since 1937) through his family and some nuns.

With the Dutch resistance, through UBBINK native of DOESBURG (Engineer – proprietor of a foundry).

With the Swedish resistance, via the Legation of Sweden in Berlin, the Baron von OTTER.

With the Swiss resistance, via the Swiss legation in Berlin, Doctor HOCHSTRASSER.

In 1942, I made the acquaintance of a French restaurant owner, at the crossroads Strasbourg-St.-Denis, Restaurant "Louis XIV" to whom I expressed my disgust with the prisons and the killings.

Q Do you know of other agents or officers of the Gestapo or the S.D. who may have had an important responsibility in the organization of the camps and the executions?

A A certain GÜNTHER and his boss EICHMANN both charged with the annihilation of the Jewish race. GÜNTHER is the son of the

known racialist writer.

Doctor GUNDNACH, *Hauptsturmführer*, native of Berlin, devoted himself to medical studies on living beings.

The SS *Sturmbannführer* HALLER of the Bromberg Police, was at Degginglen towards the end of hostilities; he practically made a specialty of the shooting of Jewish children.

The SS *Sturmbannführer* GROSS, living in Berlin, occupied himself with living beings, to the studies for cancer.

Dr. GRAWITZ who worked at Berlin, born on the eastern side of the Elbe (Pomerania) Chief of the German Red Cross but at the same time SS, *Obergruppenführer*, responsible for the administration of prisons.

Q What are the names of the heads of the camps whom you have known?

A At Oranienburg, the *Sturmbannführer* KEINDEL, a pure Nazi, responsible for numerous atrocities. He is Austrian or Bavarian.

Q Do you know of yet other war criminals?

A Yes, the SS *Gruppenführer*, Dr. Eng. KAMMLER, native of Berlin, head of supplies, responsible for the treatment of the deportees employed underground.

The SS *Sturmbannführer* FICK who has the responsibility for the attack on the religious institutions of Sennheim (Alsace).

The SS *Sturmbannführer* TONDORF, engaged in the SS since their formation.

The SS *Untersturmführer*, Dr. Wolfgang STICHEL, charged with the suppression of the anti-Nazis; decapitated a professor of the university of Berlin – a native of Berlin.

Read over, maintained and signed (signed) Kurt Gerstein (signed) Beckhardt

2 *Interrogation of 19 July 1945* : Interrogating Officer: Commandant of Military Justice Mathieu Mattéi, Military Examining Magistrate.

The Original is handwritten on paper of very large format and in very bad condition.

We present the photocopy of the publication made by the magazine *Le Monde Juif* / The Jewish World (January/March 1980, pages 27–34); naturally we have verified it and have remarked only one error: On page 34, 1st. line, it should read “à peine dix” (hardly ten) instead of “à peine deux” (hardly two).

Translation into English of interrogation referred to in 2 above, as follows:

PERMANENT MILITARY TRIBUNAL

2nd. PERMANENT MILITARY TRIBUNAL OF PARIS

Sitting at 53 Rue de la Faisanderie 53

XIVe. arr.

RECORD OF INTERROGATION OR OF CONFIRMATION

THE YEAR, One thousand nine hundred and forty-five, the nineteenth July at ten hours.

After having been brought from the military prison of Cherche-Midi

Before us, Commandant of Military Justice Mathieu MATTEI, Military examining Magistrate, assisted by COUDROY, sergeant, and by (in the margin: M. Malkov Boris, 45 years, Lieutenant, interpreter of the German language, who has sworn the oath prescribed by article 332 of the Code of criminal instruction) has been brought to our chambers, the named GERSTEIN whose first appearance is established by the record of 13 July 1945.

Let the record show that Maitre LEHMANN, duly called by our registered letter dispatched 16 July 1945 of which the postal receipt is attached and advised by the same letter of the file of proceedings being put at his disposal the day before the present day.

Counsel for the defense being present, we have interrogated the accused as follows.

Let the record show that we are giving to him a complete reading of his interrogation by the Organization for the Investigation of war crimes, at Paris, on 26 June 1945.

S.I.R.²⁴ — I confirm my previous statements. I wish to correct three points, of which one seems to me of extreme importance, that is to say:

In regard to my joining (in the margin: *Waffen SS*) it is not so much the advice and suggestions of the noncommissioned officers that pushed me to join as my personal wish to inform myself on what they were doing, these people, a thing impossible to anyone who did not wear their uniform.

— In regard to the indications given on page 2 of my interrogation, towards the end, on the subject of the “three installations are functioning respectively...”; this actually means three extermination camps.

— I rectify the last sentence of my interrogation. The Doctor Wolfgang STICHEL denounced the Professor Ordinarius of Zoology at Berlin who as a consequence was beheaded following a sentence of a people's court.

Q Please inform us in chronological order what were your assignments, transfers, occupations since France was at war with Germany.

A At the declaration of war I was a civilian, mining engineer in the service of the limited company WINTERSHALL at MERKERS (Thuringia).

On 15 August 1940, I stopped my work in this company to join the factory belonging to my grandfather at DUSSELDORF in the position

TRIBUNAL MILITAIRE PERMANENT
2^e TRIBUNAL MILITAIRE PERMANENT
DE PARIS
Séant à 53, Rue de la Faisanderie 53
XVI^e arr.

PROCES VERBAL D'INTERROGATOIRE OU DE CONFRONTATION

L'AN mil neuf cent quarante cinq, le dix neuf juillet à dix heures

Après avoir été extrait de la prison militaire du Cherche-Midi

Devant nous, Commandant de Justice Militaire Mathieu MATTEI, Juge d'instruction militaire, assisté de COUDROY, sergent, et de (en marge : M. Malkov Boris, 45 ans, Lieutenant, interprète de langue allemande, lequel a prêté le serment prescrit par l'article 332 du Code d'instruction criminelle) a été amené à

notre cabinet, le nommé GERSTEIN dont la première comparution est constatée par procès-verbal du treize juillet 1945.

Mentionnons que M^e LEHMANN, dûment appelé par notre lettre recommandée expédiée le 16 juillet 1945 dont le récépissé postal est annexé et avisé par la même lettre de la mise à sa disposition de la procédure la veille du présent jour.

Le défenseur étant présent, nous avons interrogé comme il suit l'inculpé. Mentionnons que nous donnons à lui lecture intégrale de son interrogatoire par l'Organisation de la Recherche des crimes de guerre, à Paris, le 26 juin 1945.

S.I.R. — Je confirme mes déclarations antérieures. Je tiens à rectifier trois points dont un me paraît d'une importance extrême, à savoir :

En ce qui concerne mon entrée aux (en marge : Waffen SS), ce n'est pas autant les conseils et les suggestions des sous-officiers qui me poussèrent à y entrer que mon désir personnel de me documenter sur ce que faisaient ces gens, chose impossible à qui ne portait pas leur tenue :

— en ce qui concerne les indications portées à la page 2 de mon interrogatoire, paragraphe 3 in fine, au sujet des « trois installations fonctionnent respectivement... » ; il s'agit bien de trois camps d'extermination ;

— Je rectifie la dernière phrase de mon interrogatoire : le Docteur Wolfgang STICHEL aurait dénoncé le Professeur ordinaire de Zoologie à Berlin qui par la suite a été décapité à la suite d'une exécution du Tribunal du peuple.

D. — Veuillez nous faire connaître quelles ont été dans l'ordre chronologique vos affectations, mutations, occupations depuis que la France était en guerre avec l'Allemagne.

R. — A la déclaration de la guerre j'étais civil, ingénieur des mines au service de la Société anonyme WINTERSHALL à MERKERS (Thuringe).

Le 15 août 1940 je cessai mon travail dans cette société pour entrer à l'usine appartenant à mon grand-père à DUSSELDORF et ce en qualité d'associé apportant mes connaissances techniques.

J'avais d'ailleurs des intérêts dans la dite société depuis 1930. Cette société fabriquait des pompes à huile pour les locomotives et avait pour raison sociale DE LIMON, FLUHME et Co.

Jusqu'au 5 mars 1941, je restai donc civil à cette société.

Auparavant, c'est-à-dire en décembre 1940, j'avais adressé une demande écrite pour être admis à servir en qualité de Waffen SS : la dite demande ayant été acceptée, je fus incorporé dans cette formation le 10 mars 1941.

On m'affecta à Berlin, sanitätsdienst (service sanitaire) ; Direction générale des Waffen SS. J'étais alors simple soldat — et ai suivi pendant trois mois l'instruction ordinaire des simples soldats en diverses localités.

A l'issue de cette instruction, on m'affecta à l'institut d'hygiène de Berlin SS. — Au début je n'y avais aucun emploi défini. Mais plus tard je demandai à m'occuper plus spécialement des appareils de désinfection et des questions d'eau potable.

En gros, je remplis ces fonctions jusqu'au mois d'avril 1945 avec en principe résidence à Berlin et remplissant de temps à autres quelques missions auprès des firmes qui fabriquaient les différents appareils utilisés dans le service.

En novembre 1941 j'ai obtenu le grade de sous-lieutenant SS, spécialiste (UNTERSTURMFUHRER F.).

D. — Faites-nous connaître exactement la nature des missions que vous avez remplies, notamment celles effectuées dans différents camps que vous avez vous-même énumérés dans l'interrogatoire que vous avez subi.

R. — Je me suis rendu en mission :
deux fois au camp de ORANIENBURG
deux fois à celui de DROEGEN
une fois à celui de RAVENSBRUCK
une fois à un camp d'israélites près de (un mot illisible)
une fois aux camps d'extermination de :
BELCEC (orthographe phonétique), TREBLINKA et MAIDANECK
deux fois enfin au camp de HEINKELWERK près de ORANIENBURG.

Dans les camps autres que les trois camps d'extermination, le but des différentes missions accomplies par moi était d'examiner et contrôler les installations sanitaires (désinfection, eau potable, etc.), mon rôle était purement technique.

En juin 1942 je fus chargé de transporter ultérieurement deux cent soixante kilogrammes de cyanure de potassium au camp de BELCEC. Lorsqu'on me chargea de ce transport, on me précisa qu'il s'agissait d'un secret d'Etat.

J'avais reçu comme consigne de prendre livraison à KOLLIN près de Prague de ce poison et de le transporter au camp sus-indiqué.

Je remplis ma mission au mois d'août 1942, c'est-à-dire que je transportai bien le cyanure mais le cyanure n'arriva pas à destination. Au départ, le cyanure était placé en quarante cinq bouteilles d'acier. En cours de route l'une d'elles fut vidée par mes soins avec toutes les précautions voulues car c'était dangereux.

Les quarante quatre bouteilles qui restaient n'ont pas été amenées au camp de BELCEC mais furent dissimulées par le chauffeur et moi-même à douze cents mètres environ du camp.

D. — Pourquoi avez-vous été, si l'on vous croit, personnellement choisi pour, alors que vous vous trouviez à Berlin, effectuer le transport de cyanure d'un point à un autre du territoire polonais ?

R. — Ceci est, à mon sens, dû au hasard d'une désignation provenant d'un chef quelconque. Mon nom a été mis en avant par un des officiers du service de chimie auquel l'autorité, c'est-à-dire GUNTHER, s'était au début adressée.

D. — Pourquoi l'autorité a-t-elle éprouvé le besoin d'envoyer de Berlin à KOLLIN (Tchécoslovaquie) un officier pour simplement y prendre livraison de cyanure et transporter celui-ci à BELCEC en Pologne alors qu'il aurait dû lui apparaître plus simple de détacher à ce travail de transport un officier se trouvant déjà soit en Tchécoslovaquie, soit en Pologne ?

R. — Parce qu'on me considérait comme un spécialiste de l'utilisation du cyanure pour la désinfection.

D. — Avez-vous reçu un ordre de mission, écrit ou verbal, et quels en étaient les termes ?

R. — Je reçus un ordre de mission verbal, confirmé quarante-huit heures après par écrit. Cet écrit disait approximativement ceci : je vous donne l'ordre de vous procurer deux cent soixante kilogrammes de cyanure de potassium et de les transporter à un lieu qui vous sera désigné par le conducteur du véhicule N° X... affecté à la mission.

C'est moi-même qui ai choisi KOLLIN car je savais que l'on y fabriquait du cyanure, comme on en fabriquait également à DESSAU.

S.I. — Le cyanure m'a été livré par la fabrique à KOLLIN au vu de mon ordre de mission et d'un bon de réquisition délivré par le service central de sécurité à Berlin (Reichssicherheits-hauptamt). L'ordre de mission portait un timbre avec mention « Secret d'Etat ».

D. — A qui avez-vous rendu compte de l'exécution de votre mission ?

R. — A mon retour à Berlin d'un voyage qui a duré environ deux semaines, je n'ai rendu compte à quiconque de l'exécution de ma mission. Personne ne m'a demandé quoi que ce soit.

S.I.R. — Avant le voyage, je ne connaissais pas le chauffeur qui devait me conduire. Le dit chauffeur appartenait au service central de sécurité, je l'ai perdu de vue par la suite.

D. — Comment, puisque vous ne connaissiez pas auparavant le chauffeur, pouviez-vous avoir confiance en celui-ci et ne pas remplir très exactement la mission qui vous avait été confiée et dont celui-ci était incontestablement au courant ? Et ce alors surtout que le chauffeur appartenait au service de sécurité. N'avez-vous pas craint une dénonciation qui aurait entraîné pour vous des conséquences d'une gravité certaine ?

R. — Le chauffeur a eu peur en cours de route et alors que nous avions chargé le poison. Il n'a pas mieux demandé que de me voir débarrasser la voiture de ce qui pour lui constituait un danger. Je n'ai pas eu peur de la dénonciation du chauffeur car j'étais en mesure de me justifier auprès des autorités de Berlin. D'autre part les autorités de BELCEC ne tenaient pas du tout à recevoir du cyanure, ayant déjà une autre méthode d'extermination, à savoir un moteur Diesel à échappement toxique.

Vu l'heure tardive nous suspendons le présent interrogatoire qui sera repris à 15 heures ce jour.

Lecture faite, l'inculpé persiste et signe avec nous, le greffier et interprète, approuvant la rature de dix-sept mots rayés nuls et de huit lignes rayées nulles.

Signatures : M. Mattei, B. Malkov, Kurt Gerstein, A. Coudroy.

L'an mil neuf cent quarante cinq, le dix-neuf juillet à 15 heures, assisté comme précédemment, mêmes greffier et interprète, avons continué l'interrogatoire ci-dessus suspendu en raison de l'heure tardive. Mentionnons que M^e Lehmann s'était excusé, nous avons passé outre et procédé à l'interrogatoire comme il suit :

D. — A votre départ de Berlin, pour remplir la mission dont nous avons parlé ce matin, vous a-t-on donné d'autres instructions que celles concernant le transport proprement dit du cyanure ?

R. — Parfaitement. L'officier de SS GUNTHER m'avait chargé de prendre toutes dispositions utiles pour, une fois arrivé au camp de BELCEC, remplacer comme moyen d'extermination, le moteur Diesel à échappement toxique par l'emploi du cyanure. Il m'était laissé à moi le soin d'examiner les possibilités techniques de ce remplacement.

D. — Qui avait fixé la quantité de cyanure à emporter ?

R. — C'est moi-même qui l'avait fixée et cela compte tenu de la capacité de transport de la voiture.

D. — Vous saviez donc au départ de Berlin que le cyanure était destiné à l'extermination d'êtres humains ?

R. — Je le savais. Je présumais qu'il s'agissait de Juifs et probablement de Polonais.

D. — C'est probablement aussi pour cela que vous avez pris une aussi grande quantité de poison ?

R. — Je n'ai pris pareille quantité que pour utiliser à fond la capacité de transport de la voiture.

D. — Comment devait être techniquement employé le cyanure pour l'extermination ?

R. — GUNTER à Berlin n'en avait la moindre idée. Il supposait que je devais en avoir une. Mais en réalité je n'en avais pas car je n'ai jamais utilisé le cyanure que pour la désinfection.

D. — Voulez-vous nous indiquer comment vous employiez le cyanure pour la désinfection.

R. — Deux moyens :

Le premier qui consistait à rendre étanche l'endroit à désinfecter (baraque, caserne, etc.) et à introduire dans les lieux des récipients contenant le poison, et à faire ouvrir de l'extérieur, et à l'aide d'un dispositif, les dits récipients de manière à ce que le liquide se rendit volatil.

Le deuxième moyen était employé à la désinfection des vêtements.

D. — A quelle dose employiez-vous le cyanure pour la désinfection ?

R. — Approximativement 5 kg (sic!) pour 540 m³ (cinq cent quarante mètres cubes).

S.I.R. — Je ne sais exactement quelle quantité de cyanure il faut pour tuer un homme, c'est là une question théorique, mais je pense qu'il faut environ un gramme.

S.I.R. — Je persiste à affirmer que je n'ai procédé à aucune expérience ni à aucune utilisation du cyanure.

D. — Comment avez-vous expliqué votre arrivée au camp de BELCEC puisque vous y étiez envoyé, d'après ce que vous dites vous-même, pour remplacer par le cyanure le mode d'extermination qui y était employé et ce alors que vous arriviez sans la moindre parcelle de cyanure ?

R. — Je suis arrivé avec le cyanure au camp et j'ai raconté au commandant du camp ce qui m'était arrivé en cours de route au sujet de la bouteille dont la fermeture n'avait pas été bien assurée. J'ai indiqué au commandant du camp le danger que présentait l'emploi du cyanure en lui faisant connaître que je ne pouvais prendre sur ma responsabilité l'emploi du cyanure que j'avais apporté. Ce commandant était un homme peu cultivé et s'est contenté de mes explications, disant par ailleurs être satisfait du système d'extermination en usage.

D. — Ce matin vous nous avez déclaré que quarante quatre bouteilles de cyanure — votre entier chargement, une des bouteilles ayant été vidée — n'étaient pas arrivées au camp de BELCEC car elles avaient été dissimulées par le chauffeur et vous-même à douze cents mètres environ du camp ; tout à l'heure, vous venez de nous dire être arrivé au camp avec votre chargement. Quand dites-vous la vérité ?

R. — Je suis arrivé au camp sans le cyanure mais le commandant du camp savait que j'en avais apporté dans la voiture qui était restée à douze cents mètres du camp.

D. — Pourquoi la voiture est-elle restée si loin du camp où le cyanure devait être apporté et employé d'après les instructions que vous avez reçues ?

R. — En raison du danger que ce cyanure présentait.

D. — Puisque le commandant du camp connaissait le but de votre mission et le fait que vous aviez apporté du cyanure, comment avez-vous pu dissimuler celui-ci car vous nous avez déclaré ce matin l'avoir dissimulé ?

R. — Le commandant du camp avait grand peur du cyanure, il ne tenait pas du tout à ce qu'il soit employé. D'autre part j'avais moi-même toute latitude en ce qui concerne l'utilisation ou la non-utilisation du poison.

D. — Vous avez été chargé d'une mission. Vous nous dites ne point l'avoir remplie. Vous nous dites également que le commandant du camp où vous devez remplir cette mission ne tenait pas du tout à ce que vous la remplissiez. Vous avez ce matin déclaré qu'à votre retour à Berlin vous n'aviez rendu compte à quiconque du résultat de votre mission. Nous avons tout lieu de penser que des choses pareilles n'étaient pas précisément en usage dans l'armée allemande. Expliquez-vous à ce sujet.

R. — Le lendemain de mon arrivée au camp de BELCEC est revenu le véritable commandant du camp — le hauptmann polizei WIRTH, qui avait une grosse influence à Berlin et qui a liquidé cette question sans que j'aie à intervenir.

D. — A quelles autres autorités avez-vous eu affaire au cours de votre mission à BELCEC ?

R. — J'avais reçu en cours de route, par l'intermédiaire du chauffeur, des instructions d'avoir à me rendre à LUBLIN auprès du général major Gruppen Führer SS GLOBOCNEC qui commandait les quatre camps d'extermination. Conformément à ces instructions, j'ai été reçu en audience par cet officier général. Au cours de l'audience, il m'a indiqué avoir eu quelques jours auparavant la visite de HITLER et de HIMMLER, l'un et l'autre désireux de voir pousser l'extermination des Juifs à une cadence plus rapide.

Ce général ne me donna aucune instruction d'ordre technique mais l'ordre de me rendre à BELCEC, me disant qu'il y irait lui-même, en personne car nul ne pouvait être reçu au camp sans être présenté par le général en personne.

D. — Avez-vous au cours de cette mission visité d'autres camps que celui de BELCEC ?

R. — Oui, ceux de MAIDANECK - TREBLINCA. Dans ces deux camps, j'ai été amené par le hauptmann WIRTH et le professeur Docteur PFANNENSTIEL pour que j'examine sur place les possibilités de remplacer le système d'extermination employé (moteur diesel à dégagement toxique) par le cyanure.

S.I.R. — Je ne pense pas que dans ces deux camps et à BELCEC on ait utilisé le cyanure comme moyen d'extermination mais je n'en sais rien car je n'y suis pas retourné.

D. — Vous avez donc, de votre propre aveu, reçu à Berlin une mission importante et ce en votre qualité de technicien ; cette mission était si importante que vous deviez l'accomplir comme un secret d'Etat ; vous avez visité trois camps, vous avez été reçu en audience par un général qui, étant donné le but de votre mission, a cru devoir vous rapporter les propos mêmes des deux grands chefs nazis. Comment pouvez-vous persister à nous faire croire :

- 1) que vous n'avez pas rempli le but même de votre mission ;
- 2) que vous n'avez rendu compte à personne de celle-ci ;
- 3) que personne ne vous a non plus rien demandé à ce sujet.

R. — Le hauptmann WIRTH avait une telle position personnelle auprès de HITLER et de HIMMLER qu'il a pu me dire de ne plus m'occuper de cette affaire et dans cette condition je lui ai obéi. Voilà ce que j'ai à répondre.

S.I.R. — Personne ne s'est intéressé à ce qu'est devenu le cyanure (sic !).

D. — Quand êtes-vous venu en France pendant la durée de la guerre ? Qu'y avez-vous fait ?

R. — Premier voyage en octobre 1940, j'étais alors civil et en voyage d'affaires qui dura une semaine.

Deuxième voyage — à la Noël 1940 — voyage d'affaires à Paris, d'une durée de quatre jours.

Courant 1941, je viens deux ou trois fois à Paris toujours pour affaires. Au cours d'un de ces voyages je fus en relation avec de WENDEL.

En 1942, alors que j'étais déjà SS je reviens à Paris trois fois, en service, pour achat d'ouvrages géographiques et scientifiques ainsi que de matériel (auto-claves).

En 1943 et 1944 j'effectuai d'autres voyages dans le même but.

S.I.R. — J'ai en effet visité les installations destinées à l'extermination des Juifs dans les camps déjà nommés.

Mention. Ici l'inculpé s'exprime en français.

Les installations étaient les plus primitives et les plus cruelles. Il y avait de petites gares de trois cents mètres environ dans lesquelles entraient les trains avec cinquante wagons. Alors les Ukrainiens chassaient à l'aide de cravaches les personnes transportées qui n'étaient pas mortes à leur arrivée. Il y avait vingt pour cent de morts. Des hauts parleurs donnaient les ordres d'avoir à se déshabiller complètement, y compris les lunettes et les appareils de prothèse (jambes artificielles, etc.). Les personnes qui débarquaient devaient attacher ensemble leurs chaussures par paires, remettre toutes les valeurs, argent et objets. Les victimes devaient apporter elles-mêmes en courant leurs effets dans les wagons. On coupait les cheveux ras aux femmes, les cheveux étaient recueillis dans des sacs à pommes de terre. Les victimes étaient amenées toutes nues sans distinction de sexe dans un passage barbelé qui conduisait dans un bâtiment spécial de bain.

L'inculpé reprend en allemand.

Ce bâtiment couvert portait sur le toit et par dérision l'étoile hébraïque. Il comportait six pièces à BELCEC et huit à TREBLINCA. On entassait à l'aide de coups de cravache les arrivants dans les dites pièces et ils y étaient si serrés qu'ils étaient obligés de se maintenir un pied sur l'autre. Les enfants à la mamelle étaient au bras de leur mère. L'entassement était tel que, même lorsque les gaz avaient fait leur œuvre, les cadavres restaient tous debout, les uns soutenant les autres.

Une fois tout le monde entassé dans chaque pièce, on faisait fermer les portes et tourner le moteur à gaz, non sans avoir soumis pendant des heures les victimes à cet entassement. Une fois j'ai compté moi-même que les victimes étaient restées ainsi entassées pendant exactement deux heures quarante neuf minutes avant que les gaz ne parviennent dans la chambre.

Le gaz parvenait dans les dites chambres par des tuyaux à ce destinés. Les victimes étaient soumises à l'effet des gaz pendant une durée d'environ trente deux minutes.

Des prisonniers juifs étaient chargés de vider les chambres à gaz des victimes que celles-ci contenaient et qui étaient couvertes de leurs propres excréments.

Des prisonniers également juifs, dentistes de profession, étaient chargés d'examiner les cadavres et de leur retirer l'or qu'ils pouvaient avoir dans la mâchoire. On fouillait également les anus et les parties sexuelles des femmes pour savoir s'ils ne recelaient pas des matières précieuses. Les cadavres étaient ensuite entassés dans d'immenses fosses communes et recouverts d'à peine dix centimètres de sable.

Les nazis étaient particulièrement fiers de l'énorme quantité d'objets et de vêtements récupérés de cette façon. C'était, disaient-ils, d'un rapport cinq fois plus élevé que toutes les collectes de vêtements organisées en Allemagne. On fouillait de même les cadavres de ceux qui étaient décédés au cours du voyage en chemin de fer.

S.I.R. — Dans les trois camps que j'ai visités, il est mort le jour de ma visite environ trente cinq mille Juifs. Je précise que mes visites ont eu lieu les 17 et 18 août 1942.

S.I.R. — Les trains devaient en principe arriver journellement dans les camps.

S.I.R. — Sans être très précis, je puis indiquer que le système d'extermination a dû commencer au mois d'avril 1942.

S.I.R. — Je pense que l'extermination a duré toute la guerre puisque je n'ai jamais entendu dire qu'elle ait cessé.

D. — Comment s'appelait exactement le service, si l'on peut dire, dont relevait cette extermination préméditée et exécutée pendant si longtemps ?

R. — Il s'appelait EINSATZ. REINHARDTZ. Ce service relevait lui-même du R.S.H.A. (service central de sécurité).

Lecture faite, l'inculpé persiste et signe avec nous, le greffier et l'interprète, approuvant la rature de neuf mots rayés nuls et de une ligne, rayée nulle.

Signature : M. Mattei, B. Malkov, Kurt Gerstein, A. Coudroy.

of a partner contributing my technical knowledge.

I had moreover an interest in this company since 1930. This company manufactured oil pumps for locomotives and had as its registered name DE LIMON, FLUHME and Co.

Until 5 March 1941, I thus stayed as a civilian in this company.

Previously, that is to say in December 1940, I had sent a written request to be admitted to serve as a *Waffen* SS: this request having been accepted, I was incorporated into this formation on 10 March 1941.

I was assigned at Berlin, *sanitätsdienst* (sanitary service); General Direction of the *Waffen* SS. I was then a simple soldier — and had followed for three months the ordinary instruction of the private soldier in various places.

At the end of this training I was assigned to the institute of hygiene of Berlin SS.

At the beginning I did not have any specific job. But later I requested to work more specially on the appliances for disinfection and the questions of drinking water.

In summary, I fulfilled these functions until the month of April 1945 with, in principle, residence at Berlin and fulfilling at one time and another some missions to the firms who manufactured the different appliances used in the service.

In November 1941 I obtained the rank of sublieutenant SS, specialist (*UNTERSTURMFÜHRER F.*).

Q Tell us exactly the nature of the missions that you fulfilled, notably those effected in the different camps which you have yourself enumerated in the interrogation you have undergone.

A I have been on missions: Twice to the camp at ORANIENBURG. Twice to that of DROEGEN. Once to that of RAVENSBRUCK. Once to a camp of Israelites near (illegible word.) Once to the extermination camps of: BELCEC (phonetic spelling), TREBLINKA and MAIDAN-ECK, finally twice to the camp of HEINKELWERK near ORANIENBURG. In the camps other than the three extermination camps, the purpose of the different missions accomplished by me was to examine and check the sanitary installations (disinfection, drinking water, etc.), my role was purely technical.

Later in June 1942, I was charged with transporting two hundred and sixty kilograms of potassium cyanide to the camp of BELCEC. When I was charged with this transport, I was clearly told that it concerned a state secret.

I had received orders to take delivery at KOLLIN near Prague of this poison and to transport it to the above-mentioned camp.

I fulfilled my mission in the month of August 1942, that is to say that I duly transported the cyanide but the cyanide did not arrive at the destination. On leaving, the cyanide was put in forty-five steel bottles.

On the road one of them was emptied under my care with all the necessary precautions because it was dangerous.

The forty-four bottles which remained were not taken to the camp of BELCEC but were concealed by the driver and myself at about twelve hundred meters from the camp.

Q Since you were stationed in Berlin, why were you, if one believes you, personally chosen to effect the transport of the cyanide from one point to another on Polish territory?

A This is, in my opinion, due to the chance designation of some chief or other. My name was put forward by one of the officers of the chemical service, that is to say GUNTHER, of whom the authority had first inquired.

Q Why did the authority approve the need to send from Berlin to KOLLIN (Czechoslovakia) an officer simply to take delivery there of cyanide and to transport this to BELCEC in Poland since it must have seemed simpler to him to detach for this work of transportation an officer already stationed in Czechoslovakia, or Poland?

A Because I was considered a specialist in the utilization of cyanide for disinfection.

Q Did you receive an order for this assignment, written or verbal, and what were the terms of it?

A I received a verbal order, confirmed forty-eight hours afterwards in writing. This written order said approximately this: I give you the order to obtain two hundred and sixty kilograms of potassium cyanide and to transport them to a place which will be specified to you by the driver of the vehicle no X . . . attached to the mission.

It is myself who chose KOLLIN because I knew that cyanide was manufactured there, as it was similarly made at DESSAU.

S.I.R. The cyanide was delivered to me by the factory at KOLLIN in view of my detached service orders and of a requisition—voucher issued by the central service of security at Berlin (*Reichssicherheitshauptamt*). The service orders carried a stamp with the words “State secret.”

Q To whom did you report the execution of your mission?

A On my return to Berlin from a trip which lasted about two weeks, I did not report to anyone on the execution of my mission. No one asked me anything at all.

S.I.R. Before the journey, I did not know the driver who was to drive me. This driver belonged to the central security service, I lost touch with him afterwards.

Q How, since you did not know the driver previously, could you have confidence in him to carry out very exactly the mission with which you had been entrusted and about which he indisputably was informed? And this when above all the driver belonged to the security

service. Were you not frightened of a denunciation which would have entailed for you consequences of a certain gravity?

A The driver was frightened during the course of the journey and since we had loaded the poison. He asked nothing better than to see me rid the car of what for him was a danger. I was not afraid of a denunciation by the driver because I was in a position to justify myself to the Berlin authorities. On the other hand the authorities of BELCEC did not agree at all with receiving the cyanide, having already another method of extermination, that is to say a diesel engine with a toxic exhaust.

In view of the late hour we adjourn the present interrogation which will be reopened at 15 hours today.

Read over, the accused continuing and signs with us, the court clerk and interpreter, witnessing the erasure of seventeen words crossed through invalid and eight lines crossed through invalid.

Signatures: M. Mattei, B. Malkov, Kurt Gerstein, A. Coudroy.

The year one thousand nine hundred and forty-five, the nineteenth of July at 15 hours, assisted as before, the same court clerk and interpreter, we have continued the interrogation adjourned above by reason of the late hour. Let the record show that Maitre Lehmann has excused himself, which we have passed over and have proceeded with the interrogation as follows:

Q On your departure from Berlin, to fulfill the mission of which we spoke this morning, were you given instructions other than those concerning the transport properly so called of the cyanide?

A Of course. The SS Officer GUNTHER had charged me to make all serviceable arrangements, once arrived at the camp of BELCEC, replace the diesel engine with toxic exhaust with cyanide as a means of extermination. It was left to me to examine the technical possibilities of this changeover.

Q Who had decided the quantity of cyanide to take?

A I myself decided it by taking into account the load capacity of the vehicle.

Q You knew then on your departure from Berlin that the cyanide was intended for the extermination of human beings?

A I knew it. I assumed that it related to Jews and probably Poles.

Q It is probably also for that reason that you took such a large quantity of poison?

A I took such a large quantity only to utilize to the maximum the load capacity of the vehicle.

Q How was the cyanide to have been used technically for extermination?

A GUNTER at Berlin did not have the slightest idea about it. He supposed that I must have some idea. But in reality I did not because

I never used cyanide except for disinfection.

Q Would you like to tell us how you employed cyanide for disinfection?

A Two methods: The first consisted in making airtight the place to disinfect (hut, barracks, etc.) and introducing in these places receptacles containing the poison, and with the help of an apparatus, opening said receptacles from the outside in such a way that the liquid became volatile. The second method was employed for the disinfection of clothes.

Q In what proportions did you use cyanide for disinfection?

A Approximately 5 kg (sic!) for 540 m³ (five hundred and forty cubic meters).

S.I.R. I do not know exactly what quantity of cyanide is necessary to kill a man, this is a theoretical question, but I think it needs about one gram.

S.I.R. I persist in affirming that I did not make any experiment nor any utilization of cyanide.

Q How did you explain your arrival at the camp of BELCEC since you were sent there, according to what you yourself say, to replace by cyanide the method of extermination which was used there and yet you arrived without the least quantity of cyanide?

A I arrived with the cyanide at the camp and I told the commandant of the camp what had happened to me on the way concerning the bottle that had not been securely closed. I pointed out to the commandant of the camp the danger involved in the use of cyanide by informing him that I could not assume the responsibility for making use of the cyanide which I had brought. This commandant was satisfied with my explanations, saying besides that he was satisfied with the extermination system in use.

Q This morning you stated to us that forty-four bottles of cyanide — your entire consignment, one of the bottles having been emptied — did not arrive at the camp of BELCEC because they had been hidden by the driver and yourself at about twelve hundred meters from the camp; just now, you have been telling us you arrived at the camp with your consignment. When are you speaking the truth?

A I arrived at the camp without the cyanide but the commandant of the camp knew that I had brought it in the vehicle which was left at twelve hundred meters from the camp.

Q Why was the vehicle left so far from the camp where the cyanide was to be brought and employed according to the instructions which you received?

A Because of the danger which the cyanide presented.

Q Since the camp commandant knew of the purpose of your mission and the fact that you had brought the cyanide, how were you able

to hide this for this morning you declared to us that you had hidden it?

A The camp commandant had a great fear of cyanide, and he was not agreeable at all that it should be used. On the other hand, I myself had every latitude as to the utilization or non-utilization of the poison.

Q You were charged with a mission. You tell us of not having fulfilled it at all. Likewise you tell us that the commandant of the camp where you have to complete this mission did not want you to complete it at all. You stated this morning that on your return to Berlin you did not report to anyone on the result of your mission. We have every reason to think that such things were not exactly customary in the German army. Explain yourself on this subject.

A The morning after my arrival at the camp of BELCEC the real camp commandant returned — the *hauptmann polizei* WIRTH, who had great influence at Berlin and who liquidated this question without my having to intervene.

Q With what other authorities did you have to deal in the course of your mission to BELCEC?

A While on the way, I had received instruction via the driver, to report to LUBLIN to major-general *GruppenFührer* SS GLOBOCNEC who commanded the four extermination camps. In conformity with these instructions, I was received in audience by this general officer. In the course of the audience, he mentioned to me having had some days previously a visit from HITLER and HIMMLER, and both the one and the other wishing to see the extermination of the Jews pushed at a faster rate.

This general did not give me any instruction of a technical nature except the order to report to BELCEC, telling me that he would go there himself, in person because no one could be received at the camp without being introduced by the general in person.

Q Did you in the course of this mission visit camps other than this one of BELCEC?

A Yes, those of MAIDANECK—TREBLINCA. In those two camps, I was taken by the *hauptmann* WIRTH and the professor Doctor PFANNENSTIEL so that I might examine on the spot the possibility of replacing the extermination system employed (diesel engine with toxic emission) by cyanide.

S.I.R. I do not think that in these two camps and at BELCEC cyanide was used as an extermination method but I know nothing about it because I never returned there.

Q You did then, by your own admission, receive at Berlin an important mission, and this in your capacity as a technician; this mission was so important that you had to accomplish it as a state secret; you visited three camps, you were received in audience by a general who, granted the purpose of your mission, believed himself bound to recount to you

even the intentions of the two great Nazi chiefs.

How can you persist in making us believe:

1 that you did not even accomplish the purpose of your mission;

2 that you reported to no one on this;

3 that no one moreover questioned you at all on this subject.

A The *hauptmann* WIRTH had such a personal position in relation to HITLER and HIMMLER that he was able to tell me not to concern myself further with this matter and in the circumstances I obeyed him. That is what I have to reply.

S.I.R. No one interested himself in what became of the cyanide (sic!).

Q When did you come to France during the war? What did you do here?

A First trip in October 1940, I was still a civilian and on a business trip which lasted a week. Second trip — at Christmas 1940 — business trip to Paris of a length of four days. During 1941, I came two or three times to Paris, always on business. In the course of one of these trips I was in contact with de WENDEL.

In 1942, when I was already SS I returned to Paris three times, on duty, for the purchase of geographic and scientific material as well as (steam-tight) material.

In 1943 and 1944 I made other trips for the same purpose.

(Minute. Here the accused expresses himself in French.)

S.I.R. The installations were the most primitive and the most cruel. There were little stations of about three hundred meters in which the trains entered with fifty cars. Then the Ukrainians chased with the help of horsewhips the persons transported who were not dead on their arrival. Twenty per cent were dead. Loudspeakers gave the orders to have to undress completely, including spectacles and the appliances of prosthesis (artificial legs, etc.). The persons who detrained had to tie together their shoes in pairs, hand in all the valuables, money, and objects. The victims themselves had to run and bring their things into the wagons. The women's hair was cut close, the hair was gathered into potato sacks. The victims were brought all naked without distinction of sex into a barbed wire passage which led in to a special bath building.

The accused resumes in German.

This covered building carried on the roof and in derision the Hebrew star. It consisted of six rooms at BELCEC and eight at TREBLINCA. With the help of blows from horsewhips the arrivals were crowded into these rooms and they were so crushed there that they were obliged to hold themselves up one foot on the other. Babies at the breast were in their mothers' arms. The cramming was such that, even when the gases had done their work, the corpses all stayed

standing, one supporting the other.

Once everyone was crowded into each room, the doors were closed, and the gas engines started, not without the victims having submitted to this cramming for hours. Once I myself counted that the victims stayed crushed like that for exactly two hours forty-nine minutes before the gases reached the chamber.

The gas arrived into the said chambers by pipes to its destination. The victims were subjected to the effect of the gases for a period of about thirty-two minutes.

The Jewish prisoners were charged with emptying the gas chambers of the victims that they contained and who were covered with their own excrement.

Prisoners who were also Jews, dentists by profession, were charged with examining the cadavers and to take out from them any gold which they might have in the jaw. The anus and the sexual parts of the women were also searched to see if they contained precious materials. The cadavers were then piled into immense common ditches and covered with hardly two (corrected = ten) centimeters of sand.

The Nazis were especially proud of the enormous quantity of objects and of clothes retrieved in this way. It brought in a yield, they said, five times bigger than all the collections of clothing organized in Germany. In the same way, the bodies of those who had died during the railway journey were searched.

S.I.R. In principle the trains were to arrive at the camps daily.

S.I.R. Without being very exact, I can indicate that the system of extermination must have begun in the month of April 1942.

S.I.R. I think that the extermination lasted all the war since I never heard it said that it stopped.

Q What was the precise name of the service, if one can call it that, which was responsible for this extermination that was premeditated, and executed over such a long period?

A It was called EINSATZ REINHARDTZ. This service itself was part of the R.H.S.A. (central security service).

Read over, the accused continuing and signs with us, the court clerk and interpreter witnessing the erasure of nine words crossed through invalid and one line crossed through, invalid.

Signatures: M. Mattéi, B. Malkov, Kurt Gerstein, A. Coudroy.

Article in *France-Soir*, 4 July 1945

This article is interesting above all for the facsimile of an extract of a "confession," reproduced on the first page of the newspaper.

It is a short extract in the German language of Gerstein's biography in which we find the details common to all the texts.

à Paris



ans les locaux de
ur René Delpêche.
(Institut Français).

N D
rie
al !

...leur. Une de ses pro-
...era de créer les
...de l'ordre, qu'il
...à combattre par tous
...la Résistance. Il devient
...leur auxiliaire de la

...la décade de la Wehr-
...10.000 individus et leurs
...armés part pour l'Alle-
...un des membres
...récusés - formés par de
...militaires. Avant de
...moment à quitter l'Alle-
...trait de faire arrêter pré-
...A Edouard, ou "Intelli-
...avait retrouvé - so

"J'AI EXTERMINÉ jusqu'à 11.000 personnes par jour"

(Du correspondant de guerre
GEO KELBER)

STUTTGART, ... juin. --
Devant Dieu et devant les
hommes, je prends la res-
ponsabilité de mes aveux, car
j'ai été l'un des rares té-
moins oculaires des plus
grands assassinats hitlé-
riens. Je n'ai rien retranché
des choses que j'ai vues ; je
n'y ai rien ajouté. Ainsi est
la vérité. Que le ciel m'aide...

Ainsi parla Kurt Gerstein, in-
génieur S.S., professeur diplômé
à Marburg, Aix-la-Chapelle et
Berlin, aux officiers enquêteur
de la première armée française.
Et il commença sa déposition
qu'il rédigea ensuite soigneuse-
ment et signa. C'est le seul des
abominations, des monstruosité
dont Gerstein se chargea, au
camp de Belzec, en qualité de
chef des exécutions scientifiques :

— Un jour, le sturmbannfü-
hrer Guntler m'envoya d'urgen-
ce à Lublin pour une affaire
d'Etat que je devais être la on-
zième personne à connaître, par
faveur spéciale du Führer. A
Lublin, je fus reçu par le gé-
néral S.S. Globocnik et son
adjoint, le colonel S.S. Wirth,
qui m'apprirent qu'Hitler et
Himmler avaient visité la veille
les trois stations expérimenta-
les d'asphyxie de Belzec, de So-
bodor et de Treblinka. Hitler
avait été très mécontent. Le
procédé d'asphyxie par les gaz
d'échappement des moteurs Die-
sel est trop lent, dit-il. Il faut
éliminer plus vite le matériel
humain biologiquement sans in-
térêt. Et c'est moi que l'on
avait choisi pour présider à
cette accélération. On me con-
duisit le lendemain à Belzec.
Un bâtiment composé de cinq
pièces étanches, de cinq mètres
sur cinq. Deux inscriptions au
fronton : « Fondation Mecken-
holt ; Inhalation et Hydrothé-
rapie ».

Les sept heures, il y eut un
« arrivage » : un train de mar-
chandises de 45 wagons, d'où
les S.S. et leurs aides ukrai-
niens firent descendre à coups
de cravache 6.700 personnes :
hommes, femmes et enfants. Un
haut-parleur clama :

— Déposez vos vêtements et
objets personnels.
L'air de danse fut diffusé :
« Je qui tiens-tu tes jolis yeux
bruns... » Les femmes étaient
entraînées conduites chez le
coiffeur installé dans une petite
baraque portant l'inscription
« garde-robe ». Et la caravane
pénétra dans la fondation Meck-
enholt.

— Entassez bien ! ordonna
le colonel Wirth.

700 à 800 personnes furent
poussées dans les cinq pièces.
Wirth m'expliquait la « manœu-
vre ».

— Le poids moyen de cha-
que homme étant de 65 kgs.

le poids moyen de cha-
que homme étant de 65 kgs.

Le document officiel du 2^e Bureau de la 1^{re} Armée française,
où Gerstein, le bourreau de Belzec, a consigné ses aveux.

Le document officiel du 2^e Bureau de la 1^{re} Armée française,
où Gerstein, le bourreau de Belzec, a consigné ses aveux.

Le document officiel du 2^e Bureau de la 1^{re} Armée française,
où Gerstein, le bourreau de Belzec, a consigné ses aveux.

nos chambres peuvent recevoir
25.250 kgs d'êtres humaine
chacun. Avec un peu de bon-
né volonté nous obtenons une
honnête moyenne de 250 per-
sonnes par « opération » !

Les portes furent fermées.
Les moteurs Diesel mis en
mouvement. Nous regardions
par des lucarnes, à l'intérieur
des chambres violemment
éclairées. Les moteurs fonc-
tionnaient mal. Wirth s'excusa
de la mauvaise marche de
l'opération. Vingt, trente, qua-
rante minutes passèrent. Le
préposé aux moteurs Diesel,
un S.S. nommé Meckenholt,
s'impatients. Enfin les mo-
teurs tournèrent.

A l'intérieur des baraques
les hommes étaient toujours
vivants ! Je chronométrais la
durée du supplice : cinquante,
soixante minutes ! Les pre-
mières morts tombèrent. Dix

minutes passèrent encore. En-
fin, ce fut fini !...

Des équipes d'Ukrainiens
sortent les cadavres tout ruis-
selants de sueur et d'ordures.
Ils arrachent les dents en or,
ils classent les cheveux des
femmes destinées à être utili-
sés pour la fabrication des
étoffes et dans certains instru-
ments de précision pour sous-
marins ! Quand le déblayage
fut fini, d'autres Ukrainiens
poussèrent une nouvelle four-
née de condamnés dans les
chambres d'asphyxie.

**J'étais en règle avec
ma conscience"**

Je comprenais ma mission,
ajoute Gerstein. On me demandait
de découvrir un moyen de suppre-

2 SUITE PAGE 2

GROS SUCCÈS A LONDRES pour la Comédie-Française

Et plus vif succès encore pour la
dernière tournée de Churchill !!

(De notre envoyé spécial permanent Jacques PECHERAL)

LONDRES, 3 juillet (par téléphone). — Dans la salle du
New Theatre où la Comédie-Française, en visite à Londres,
donnait hier soir, en présence de notre ambassadeur M. Ma-
sigli, sa première avec L'Impromptu de Versailles et le Bar-
bier de Séville, un Anglais, assis à côté de moi, fut tout remar-
quer à son voisin français, que ce n'était pas seulement un
magnifique spectacle mais, en même temps, il en jugea par
la réaction des spectateurs, la preuve de l'immense progrès
fait par les Britanniques dans la compréhension de l'esprit
français.

Le public était en grosse ma-
jorité anglais et les plus fines
boutades, les plus spirituelles

Les aveux d'un bourreau nazi

SUITE 2

don plus rapide et plus efficace que cette extermination d'un genre primitif. Je proposai l'utilisation de gaz plus toxiques, et notamment de ceux que dégage l'acide prussique.

Et le misérable conclut :

— J'étais en règle avec ma conscience car j'abrégeais les souffrances d'une humanité « biologiquement inutile et vouée à la destruction », comme disait Hitler. Désigné sous le nom de catégorie 3, ce matériel humain comprenait des Juifs, des Polonais, des Russes, des Tchèques, des Lituanais et des Hongrois.

» Jusqu'à onze mille exécutions furent ainsi opérées certains jours. Beaucoup d'enfants figuraient parmi les victimes. De temps à autre un professeur faisait aux hommes chargés des exécutions — le « kommando de travail » — un discours pour leur expliquer leur grande mission. Hitler lui-même, visitant Belzec avait dit : « Nous enterrerons ici des plaques de bronze afin que nos descendants connaissent notre œuvre d'assainissement biologique de la planète ». Pour sa défense, Gerstein expli-

que qu'en 1914 il tenta d'entrer en communication avec le pasteur « résistant » Niemöller et que, même, il se présenta, à Berlin, au nonce du pape qui, d'ailleurs l'éconduisit. Il prétend avoir toujours été anti-nazi et n'avoir accepté les terribles fonctions de bourreau que pour avoir la possibilité de témoigner contre le nazisme, au jour de la défaite allemande...

Le plus étrange c'est que le SS Gerstein répand ses déclarations comme preuve de sa révolte « humanitaire » et qu'il est encore et libéré, comme s'il n'avait aucun responsabilité dans l'œuvre de mort du camp de Belzec...

However, an attentive examination of this extract shows that, neither by composition nor by the typewriter lettering, is this extract identical to the comparable passage in the two texts in the German language (T III) and (T VI) known to us. On the other hand, the German text corresponds *exactly* to the French text of T Va; it seems therefore that T Va is the translation into French of this German text, whose existence we assume only thanks to the facsimile published in *France—Soir*.

Translation as follows:

“I have exterminated up to 11,000 people daily.”

(From War Correspondent Geo. Kelber Stuttgart,... June...)

Before God and before men, I take the responsibility for my words, because I have been one of the rare eyewitnesses of the biggest Hitlerian killings. I have omitted nothing of the things I have seen; and I have added nothing. This is the truth. May heaven help me . . .

Thus spoke Kurt Gerstein, SS engineer, qualified teacher at Marburg, Aix-la-Chapelle, and Berlin, to the investigating officer of the French First army.

And he began his deposition which he wrote out carefully afterwards and signed. It is the account of abominations, of monstrosities of which Gerstein accused himself, at the camp of Belcic, in his capacity as chief of scientific executions.

One day the *sturmbannführer* Guntier sent me urgently to Lublin for “a matter of state which I would be the eleventh person to know, by special favor of the *Führer*.” At Lublin, I was received by the SS General Globocnec and his assistant, SS Colonel Wirth, who informed me that the day before Hitler and Himmler had visited the three experimental stations for asphyxia at Belcic, Sobidor, and Treblinca. Hitler had been very displeased. “The process of asphyxia by the exhaust gases of Diesel engines is too slow,” he said. “It is necessary to eliminate more speedily the human material which is biologically without interest.” And it is I who had been chosen to preside over this speed-up. I was driven the next day to Belcic. A building composed of five airtight rooms, each of five meters by five. Two inscriptions on the front: “Meckenholt Foundation; Inhalation and Hydrotherapy.”

At seven o’clock, there was an “arrival”: a freight train of 43 cars, from which the SS and their Ukrainian helpers made 6,700 people descend with blows from their horsewhips; men, women, and children. A loudspeaker shouted:

“Deposit your clothes, and personal effects.”

A dance tune was broadcast: “From whom do you get your pretty brown eyes?” Then the women were taken to the hairdresser installed

in a little hut carrying the sign "Cloak Room." And the procession entered into the Meckenholt Foundation.

"Crowd them in well!" Colonel Wirth ordered.

700 to 800 persons were pushed into the five rooms. Wirth explained the "maneuver" to me.

"The average weight of each man being 65 kgs., each of our chambers can receive 25,250 kgs. of human beings. With a little goodwill, we obtain a fair average of 750 persons per 'operation.' "

The doors were closed. The diesel engines were started up. We looked through the dormer windows, into the interior of the chambers which were brightly lit. The engines were working badly. Wirth apologized for the faulty running of the operation. Twenty, thirty, forty minutes passed. The operator of the diesel engines, an SS man named Meckenholt, was getting impatient. Finally the engines started.

In the interior of the huts the men were still living! I timed the length of the agony: Fifty, sixty minutes! The first dead fell. Ten minutes passed again. Finally, it was over! . . .

Ukrainian teams bring out the corpses all streaming with sweat and excrement. They pull out the gold teeth. They sort the women's hair, intended to be used for the manufacture of fabric and in certain precision instruments for submarines! When the clearing away was finished, other Ukrainians pushed a new batch of the condemned into the asphyxiation chambers.

"I was at peace with my conscience"

. . . I understood my mission, adds Gerstein. I was being asked to find a means of putting to death more rapid and more efficient than this primitive type of extermination. I proposed the use of the gases of higher toxicity and notably those given off by prussic acid.

And the wretch concludes:

"I was at peace with my conscience, for I shortened the sufferings of human beings 'biologically useless and doomed for destruction,' as Hitler said. Classified under the name of Category 3, this human material comprised Jews, Poles, Russians, Czechs, Lithuanians and Hungarians.

"Up to eleven thousand executions were thus effected some days. Many children were numbered among the victims. From time to time a professor made to the "labor commando," the men responsible for the executions, a speech explaining to them their great mission. Hitler himself, while visiting Belcic, had said "We shall emplace plaques of bronze here so that our descendents know our work of biological decontamination of our planet." In his defense, Gerstein explains that in 1944 he tried to get in contact with the "resistance" pastor Niemöller

and that he even presented himself at Berlin to the papal nuncio who, however, showed him out. He pretends to have always been anti-Nazi and to have accepted the terrible duties of executioner only to have the chance of witnessing against Nazism on the day of Germany's defeat.

The strangest thing is that this SS Gerstein pours out his declarations as proof of his "humanitarian" revolt, and that he is still at liberty, as though he had no responsibility at all in the work of death at the Belcic camp.

Request for a Lawyer dated 15 July, 1945

This document is preserved in the file of the French Military Justice Department. It consists of one sheet written front and reverse in capital letters.

It will be noticed that Gerstein requested a Christian lawyer, conversant with religious questions. It is Maître Pierre Lehmann who was assigned for his defense: he was present on 19 July 1945 during the morning interrogation, but absent from the afternoon interrogation.

By letter dated 25 July 1945, addressed to the examining magistrate, Maitre Lehmann let it be known that he would not be able to be present at the interrogation of the accused Gerstein scheduled for 26 July, an "accused who, moreover, does not seem at all guilty."

Gerstein was found dead in his cell 25 July 1945, at about 14 hours.

Maitre Lehmann did not die until 1980. Inexplicably enough, Gerstein's Paris lawyer was not questioned by Pierre Joffroy who, however, in the years 1966-1968, toured the whole of Europe in order to find persons who, in however small a way, had been close to the former SS officer.

Maitre Lehmann was easily accessible; he lived in Paris, in the 16th. *arrondissement*, at an address listed in the telephone directory.

Translation of above, as follows:

Gerstein, Kurt

Requests Monsieur the Commandant of the Military Tribunal of Cherche Midi

To permit him the choice of a Lawyer. Before yesterday, I did not know the name of such a lawyer. But I appeal to you to permit me either the confidential lawyer of the legation of the Holy Father at Paris or the confidential lawyer of His Highness the Bishop of Paris or that of the Congregation of the Society of Jesus of Paris. In my case are treated the affairs of the Christian Churches for which I beg you such a lawyer with interests and knowledge specifically Christian.

GERSTEIN KURT

DEMANDE A MONSIEUR LE COMMANDANT DU TRIBUNAL MILITAIRE
DE CHERCHER M. IDI

DE LUI PERMETTRE L'ACCÈS D'UN AVOCAT. AVANT-HIER, JE
NE CONNAISSAIS PAS LE NOM D'UN TEL AVOCAT. MAIS JE VOUS
SOLLICITE DE ME PERMETTRE SI L'AVOCAT DE CONFIANCE
DE LA LÉGATION DU SAINT PÈRE À PARIS OU L'AVOCAT DE CON
FIANCE DE SA ALTESSE L'ÉVÊQUE DE PARIS OU CELUI DE LA
CONGRÉGATION "SOCIÉTAS JESUS" DE PARIS. À MON CAS
SONT TRAITÉS DES AFFAIRES DES ÉGLISES CHRÉTIENNES,
POUR LESQUELLES JE VOUS PRIE TEL AVOCAT AVEC DES
INTÉRÊTS ET CONNAISSANCES SPÉCIFIQUEMENT CHRÉTIENNES.

MOI MÊME N'AYANT PAS SURMOI QUE DE CCA. 1000.-
MARK DE MONNAIE ALLEMANDE, JE SUIS SUR QUE SE
DECLARERONT RESPONSABLES POUR LE SALAIRE :

1) LA BÉKENTNISKIRCHE DE LA WESTPHALIE DU SUD, ÉGLISE
DE LA RÉSTANCE ANTINAZIE, DONT J'ÉTAIS PRESBYTERIEN
REPRÉSENTÉ PAR MESSRS. LES PASTEURS REHLING ET KUEPPER
À HAGEN WESTPHALIE. 2) LA BÉKENTNISKIRCHE DE

SARREBRUCK, REPRESENTÉ PAR MR. LE PASTEUR
OTTO WEHR À SARREBRUCK. — 3.) LE FABRICANT
INGÉNIEUR DIPLOMÉ UBBINK DE DOESBOURG —
HOLLANDE, ~~COUSIN~~ MEMBRE DE LA RÉISTANCE
ANTINAZIE HOLLANDAISE. LES PERSONNES CITOYENNES
CONNAISSANT MON CAS. — JE PRIE MONSIEUR SA
DIGNITÉ L'ÉGURÉ' DE PRISON DEME PROCUER
UN TÊL AVOCAT.

15 JUILLET 45

KURT GERSTEIN

Wüllgast

Myself having on me only about 1000 mark of German money, I am sure that (they) will declare themselves responsible for the salary:

1 The Bekenntniskirche of South Westphalia, Church of the Anti-Nazi Resistance, of which I was Presbyterian, represented by Messrs. the pastors Rehling and Keupper at Hagen Westphalia.

2 The Bekenntniskirche of Sarrebruck, represented by Msgr. the Pastor Otto Wehr at Sarrebruck.

3 The Manufacturer qualified engineer Ubbink of Doesburg-Holland, member of the Dutch anti-Nazi Resistance. The aforementioned persons know my case. — I beg Monsieur his Dignity the prison chaplain to obtain such a lawyer for me.

15 July 1945 Kurt Gerstein (signed)

Letter from Maître Pierre Lehmann

Pierre Lehmann

Lawyer of the Appeal Court

2 rue Edmond About

Paris 16

(Phone) Passy 44-44

25 July 1945

GERSTEIN

My Commandant,

To my deep regret, it will not be possible for me to assist the accused GERSTEIN Thursday 26. I am most disappointed, not only in deference to Justice and to yourself, but also because this affair seems to be extremely interesting.

My worries are lessened by the thought that an impartiality that I learned to appreciate from the first session of the examination will fully safeguard the rights of the accused who, moreover, does not seem at all guilty.

Please be good enough, Commandant, to have the kindness to excuse me and to accept the assurance of my deep respect.

(Signed) Pierre Lehmann

To Monsieur Commandant MATTEI

Examining Magistrate

Second Military Tribunal of Paris

53 rue de la Faisanderie 53

Paris 16

Fragments of Documents Found after His Death

In the report drawn up on 25 July 1945 by the superintendent of

PIERRE LEHMANN

AVOCAT A LA COUR D'APPEL

2 RUE EDMOND ABOUT

PARIS 16^e

~~Passy 44-44~~ Passy 44-44

25 juillet 1945

GERSTEIN

Mon Commandant,

A mon vif regret, il ne me sera pas possible d'assister l'inculpé GERSTEIN jeudi 26. J'en suis navré, non seulement par déférence pour la Justice & pour vous-même, mais aussi parce que cette affaire paraît extrêmement intéressante.

Mes scrupules sont atténués à la pensée qu'une impartialité que j'ai su apporter dès la première séance d'instruction sauvegardera pleinement les droits d'un inculpé qui, au surplus, ne **semble** point coupable.

Veuillez, mon Commandant, avoir la bonté de m'excuser & d'agréer l'assurance de ma haute considération.

Pierre Lehmann

A Monsieur le Commandant MATTEI
Juge d'Instruction
Deuxième Tribunal Militaire de PARIS
53 rue de la Faisanderie 53
PARIS.16e.

police of the Notre Dame des Champs district of Paris one can read notably:

“Gerstein has left several letters in which he has made known his intention to commit suicide. They were produced to us. They must be forwarded to Commandant Mattéi, examining magistrate.”

The Commandant Mattéi actually receives these documents; there are fourteen of them. The examining magistrate writes out the list of these documents numbered 1 to 14 and addresses them to the director of the Service for Judicial Identity; he requests that each of the documents be photographed in four copies.

The Professor Ch. Sannié, director of Judicial Identity, composes a report on 9 October 1945; he confirms having completed the task assigned to him, except for document No. 12 which he has not received.

On 10 October 1945, Commandant Mattéi appends to the file *two officially sealed envelopes* containing, in one the originals, in the other the photographs.

On the order of the Minister of War, the whole file is dispatched to London, on 10 November 1945, for the attention of Professor Gros, to be forwarded to the Polish delegate at the United Nations Commission for War Crimes.

For almost twenty-six years, a vain search is made to trace the Gerstein file. It is found, on the occasion of the reclassification of old files, on 3 August 1971, at the French Ministry of foreign affairs. Since that date, it has been returned to the Direction of Military Justice at Paris. But it is incomplete; the *two officially-sealed envelopes have disappeared*.

Of these documents written by Gerstein in his prison, we can therefore only present the list, such as it appears in the report of Professor Sannié.

Of the majority of the fourteen documents one reads, in the best of cases, the first and the last words of each one. It is impossible to imagine what was contained in each document. Nevertheless, for document No. 12 (which disappeared during its transfer between the Military Tribunal and the Judicial Identity Service), we can make a hypothesis:

The first words are: “Four Witnesses” and the last: “prison”; as there is no mention of writing on the reverse, one can assume that the document consisted of only one page. If we recall a passage of a “confession” of 6 May 1945 (T V) and a note in English composed by Gerstein, we can suppose that the *Obersturmführer* wrote in this document No. 12 that only four witnesses, himself included, were present at the exterminations in the poison-gas chambers; at the end of this text, he was going to specify that, of the four witnesses, he alone

was anti-Nazi and that, paradoxically, it was he who found himself in prison.

Report of M. Le Professor Ch. Sannié Paris the 9 October 1945

Affair (concerning) / GERNSTEIN (sic) Kurt accused of murder.
(To) Monsieur the Commandant of Military Justice MATTEI Mathieu Military Examining Magistrate of Paris

File ref: C. R. 14.178 Paris the 9 October 1945

We, the undersigned, Docter Charles SANNIÉ, Professor at the Faculty of Medicine, Director of the Service of Judicial Identity of the Prefecture of Police, acting by virtue of an Instruction from Monsieur the Commandant of Justice, Military Examining Magistrate MATTEI Mathieu, worded as follows:

We, MATTEI Mathieu, Military Examining Magistrate of Paris, We, Commandant of Military Justice, MATTEI Mathieu, Military Examining Magistrate of Paris, in view of the proceedings begun against the named GERNSTEIN (sic) Kurt charged with murders, considering that it is necessary to investigate and to avoid costs, in view of Article 52 of the Military Code of Justice and Articles 83 and 85 of the Code of Criminal Instruction, We request and require in this need Monsieur the Director of Judicial Identity, to whom we address this present rogatory commission, to be good enough to requisition to be brought before him, for the purpose of photographing and after to address to me in four copies the attached documents:

No. 1 beginning with these words: "For Monsieur the Colonel" and finishing with "the morning";

No. 2 beginning with the words "never, never," and ending with "Christian";

No. 2 bis beginning on the face with the words: "Messieurs you may have" and ending with "the hair" and, on the reverse, beginning with "Monsieur the Curé" and ending with "Jesus Christus" followed by a signature;

No. 3 beginning with "GERNSTEIN" (sic) Kurt" on the face and ending on the reverse with "will of Gunther."

No. 4 beginning with "To the second Bureau" and ending with "Bukhardt" (sic);

No. 5 document in the German language written on one sheet with indelible pencil.

No. 6 document in the German language written on one sheet with indelible pencil.

No. 7 Letter-card written in pencil, in French, showing on the reverse the address of the Commandant of the Military Prison and the

G.F.

N° 14.178

232

Paris, le 9 octobre.

1945.

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RAPPORT
DE
M. LE PROFESSEUR CH. SANNIÉ

Affaire c/ GERNSTEIN Kurt
inculpé d'assassinat

Monsieur le Commandant de Justice Militaire
Juge d'Instruction MATTEI Mathieu
militaire de PARIS

Nous, soussigné, Docteur Charles SANNIÉ,
Professeur à la Faculté de Médecine, Directeur du
Service de l'Identité Judiciaire de la Préfecture de
Police, agissant en vertu d'une Ordonnance de
Monsieur le Commandant de Justice, Juge d'Instruc-
tion Militaire MATTEI Mathieu
tion, ainsi conçue :

Nous MATTEI Mathieu
Juge d'Instruction ~~aux Tribunaux d'Instance de~~
~~la Seine~~, Militaire de Paris,

Nous, Commandant de Justice Militaire MATTEI Mathieu
Juge d'Instruction militaire de Paris

Vu la procédure commencée contre le nommé GERNSTEIN Kurt
inculpé d'assassinats.

Attendu qu'il importe d'informer et d'éviter les frais.

Vu l'article 52 du Code de Justice Militaire et les ar-
ticles 83 et 85 du Code d'Instruction criminelle,

prions et requérons au besoin Monsieur le Directeur de
l'Identité Judiciaire,

à quel nous adressons la présente commission rogatoire, de vou-
loir bien citer à comparaître devant lui,

à l'effet de faire photographier et d'adresser ensuite en quat-
exemplaires les pièces jointes:

n°1 commençant par ces mots: "Pour Monsieur le Colonel" et finissant par "le matin";

n°2 commençant par les mots "jamais, jamais" et se terminant par "Chrétienne";

n°2 bis commençant au recto par les mots: "Messieurs ayez la" et se terminant par "les cheveux" et, au verso, commençant par "Monsieur le Curé" et se terminant par "Jésus Christis" suivi d'une signature;

n°3 commençant par "GARDSTEIN Kurt" au recto et se terminant au verso par "volonté de Gunther";

n°4 commençant par "Au deuxième Bureau" et se terminant par "Bukhardt";

n°5 pièce en langue allemande écrite sur une feuille au crayon encre;

n°6 pièce en langue allemande écrite sur une feuille au crayon encre;

n°7 carte lettre écrite au crayon, en français portant au verso l'adresse du Commandant de la Prison Militaire et le timbre de la Poste de Froissy 24-7-45 Oise;

n°8 commençant au recto par "Moi seulement" et se terminant au verso, par "notre premier veu (?);

n°9 commençant au recto, par "informé comme tous" et se terminant au verso, par "je l'ai";

n°10 commençant, au recto, par "un mot encore" et se terminant, au verso, par "cette quantité";

n°11 commençant au recto, par "contre d'une visite" et se terminant, au verso, par "encore rien";

n°12, commençant par "vostres témoins" et se terminant par "Prison";

n°13 inscriptions au crayon portées sur le dos de la couverture d'un opusculé "Wermacht Shrachführer";

n°14 inscriptions au crayon, en langue allemande, portées sur quatre pages de garde d'un livre religieux en langue allemande.

Prions, en outre, de nous renvoyer la présente Commission rogatoire avec les procès-verbaux d'information dressés en

.....

conséquence, ainsi que toutes les pièces qu'il y aurait lieu de rédiger pour son exécution, conformément à la loi.

à Paris, le six Août 1945
Le Juge d'Instruction militaire -
sig: M. MATTEI

Serment préalablement prêté, avons rempli comme suit, la mission à nous confiée.

Le 9 Août 1945, en même temps que l'ordonnance nous commettant, Monsieur le Commissaire du Gouvernement près le Tribunal Militaire Permanent de Paris nous remettait plusieurs documents à photographier, numérotés de I à 14, ayant trait à un nommé GERNSTEIN, Kurt, inculpé d'assassinat.

Ces documents ont été reproduits photographiquement recto et verso en vraie grandeur, en quatre exemplaires et sont joints au présent rapport.

Nous certifions que ces reproductions sont rigoureusement conformes aux documents originaux.

Le document n° 12, n'étant pas joint à l'ordonnance, celui-ci n'a pu être reproduit.

D'autre part, nous signalons que les documents du n° 14, concernant le livre religieux, figurent non seulement sur les quatre pages de garde, mais également sur vingt feuillets, à l'intérieur du livre. Nous avons donc jugé utile de tous les reproduire.

Y. (un)

postmark of Froissy 24-7-45 Cise;

No. 8 beginning on the front with "I only" and ending on the reverse with "our first (sight?)";

No. 9 beginning on the front with "informed like all" and ending on the reverse with "I have it";

No. 10 beginning on the front with "one word more" and ending on the reverse with "this quantity";

No. 11 beginning on the front with "against one visit" and ending on the reverse with "again nothing";

No. 12 beginning with "Four witnesses" and ending with "Prison";

No. 13 writings in pencil on the back of the cover of a pamphlet "*Wermaacht Shrachführer*";

No. 14 writings in pencil, in the German language, on four flyleaves of a religious book in German.

We request, moreover, to return to us the present rogatory commission with the information reports raised in consequence, together with all the documents which it may be necessary to draw up for its execution, in conformity with the law.

At Paris, the six August 1945, the Military Examining Magistrate.
Signed: M. MATTEI

Oath previously sworn, we have fulfilled as follows the mission assigned to us.

On 9 August 1945, at the same time as the instruction entrusted to us, Monsieur the Government Commissioner at the Permanent Military Tribunal of Paris sent us several documents to photograph, numbered 1 to 14, relating to one named GERNSTEIN (sic), Kurt, accused of murder.

These documents have been copied photographically front and reverse in their true dimensions, in four copies, and are attached to the present report.

We certify that these copies conform exactly with the original documents.

The document No. 12, not being attached to the instruction, it has not been possible to copy it.

On the other hand, we advise that the *documents No 14*, relating to the religious book, appear not only on the four flyleaves, but also on twenty leaves, at the inside of the book. Accordingly, we have judged it useful to copy them all.

(Signature)

Police Report

Commissariat of Police of the Quarter Notre-Dame-des-Champs.

The year one thousand nine hundred and forty-five and the 25 July.

Despatch to the Medico-Legal Institute: We, C. LeGall, continuing the information, sent the body of the named Gerstein to the Medico-Legal Institute for an autopsy. Commissaire of Police (signature)

Declaration of Decease: Please note that the declaration of decease has been made by my orders to the Town Hall of the VI arrondissement. Commissaire of Police (signature)

Transmission: We are sending the present report to Monsieur the Public Prosecutor with the receipt of the Medico-Legal Institute. Commissaire of Police (signature and stamp) (date and other details repeated.

Suicide by hanging — Gerstein Affair: We, C. LeGall, Commissaire of Police of the Town of Paris, more specially responsible for the District of NOTRE-DAME-DES-CHAMPS, Officer of the Judicial Police, and auxiliary to Monsieur the Prosecutor of the Republic, are informed by the Commandant of the Military Prison, 36 rue du Cherche Midi, that today a prisoner named Gerstein (Kurt) has been found hanged in his cell. We proceed to the place — of the inquiry made by M. the Commandant of the prison as by —

1 M. Gascard (Marcel), 45 years, Warrant Officer, military supervisor,

2 M. Andreucci (Noel), military supervisor

3 M. Entz (Léon), 41 years, Sergeant-Major, military supervisor.

It appears that the named Gerstein, of German nationality, was detained in this prison since the 5th. instant, being charged with war crimes, murders, and complicity, M. the Commandant MATTEI, Military Examining Magistrate at the 2nd. Military Tribunal of Paris, being charged with the examination.

Gerstein occupied cell No. 23, on the 2nd. floor of the detention building, on the (boulevard) Raspail side. He was alone.

Today at 14 hours the supervisor Entz opened the cell to bring out Gerstein. He found the latter hanged. He immediately called his colleagues Gascard and Andreucci. The three took Gerstein down.

The fire brigade (first aid) were also immediately called but the doctor was able only to confirm the death.

Gerstein left several letters in which he made known his intention to commit suicide. They were produced to us. They must be forwarded to Commandant Mattei, examining magistrate.

We went to cell 23. This cell is narrow. It has only a fan light for light and ventilation. In the interior of the fan light there is a grilled shutter. This shutter is pulled down. There is at the edge, in the center, a ring. It is through this ring that Gerstein passed a small string made from the selvage of his bed-cover, which he tore up. The witnesses say that he was hanging with his face to the wall, his knees nearly touching the

Notre-Dame-des-Champs

et le

Nous, C. Le GALL

Continuant l'information,

Le corps du
nommé Perrier a été
tenu en état de
fuit et d'antiprison

Le Commissaire de Police

claratus
e deus

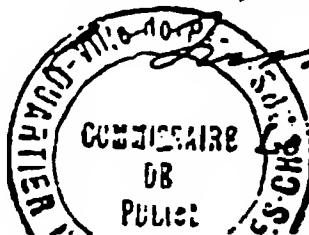
Mentionnons par la
déclaration de décès a été
faite par nos soins & la
manière du V^e Annuaire
en

Le Commissaire de Police.

Le Commissaire de Police,

reunion

Transmettant la présente in-
formation à Monsieur le Procureur
de la République avec le
vœu de l'Institut insister légat



Commissaire de Police

EFFECTUÉ
DE
POLICE

PARQUET
SECTION
N°

VILLE DE PARIS

VI^e Arrondissement

COMMISSARIAT DE POLICE
DU
1^{er} NOTRE-DAME-des-CHAMPS

Procès-Verbal

Procès-Verbal
de
par
en raison
de
sans
raison

46.109

République Française
1809

30 JUIL 1945-003

L'an mil neuf cent quarante

le vingt-cinq juillet

NOUS, C. L. CAILLÉ

Commissaire de Police de la Ville de Paris, plus spécialement chargé du Quartier NOTRE-DAME-DES-CHAMPS, Officier de Police Judiciaire, Auxiliaire de Monsieur le Procureur de la République.

Par le Commandant de la Prison militaire, 36, Rue du Cherche-Midi, que ce jour un détenu nommé Robert (Kurt), a été trouvé pendu dans sa cellule.

Nous transportons sur place :

De l'expertise faite tant auprès de M. le Commandant de la prison que de :

1^{er} M. GASCARD (Marcel) 45 ans, adjoint, surveillant militaire

2^e M. ANDREUCCI (Maurice)

surveillant militaire.

1^{er} M. ENTZ (Eén), 41 ans
sergent-chef, surveillant mili-
taire.

Il résulte que le nom-
mé Perstein, de nationalité
allemande, était détenu dans
cette prison depuis le 5 sep-
tembre, sans l'imputation
de crimes de guerre, assas-
sinats et complicité; M^{le} le
Commandant MATTEI,
Jefe d'instruction mili-
taire au 2^e Tribunal mili-
taire de Paris, étant chargé
de l'instruction.

Perstein occupait la
cellule n^o 28, au 2^e étage
du bâtiment de détention,
côté Raspail. Il était seul.

Conformément à l'art 14^e
le surveillant Lutz a
ouvert la cellule pour faire
sortir Perstein. Il a trouvé
celui-ci pendu. Il a aussitôt
appelé ses collègues
Bernard et Andrieux.
Les trois ont descendu

au mur, le ferrou touchant
presque le sol de la cellule.

Le corps de Gerstein est
étendu sur une paillasse.
Il est vêtu d'une chemise
et d'un pantalon. On voit
dans la partie antérieure
du cou un sillon viole-
né et profond qui s'ap-
puyait à la mandibule. Le vi-
sage paraît calme. On ne
relève sur le corps aucune
autre trace de violence. On
ne relève dans la cellule
aucune trace de lutte.

~~On presse~~ On presse de la prison
sur. Le corps est encore
souple. Les extrémités se
refroidissent.

On presse de la
prison nous relevons
comme suit l'état
civil du dévot =

GERSTEIN (Kurt)
né le 11 Août 1905, à Muns-
ter (Westphalie) de Ludwig
et de Clara Schermann, co-
munié à Hagen (Westphalie)
Nationalité allemande



Le dix mil neuf cent quarante cinq, le dix Octobre

Nous, Mathieu Matter, Commandant de Justice Militaire,
Juge d'instruction militaire au 2^eème Tribunal Militaire Permanent
de Paris

Vu la procédure instruite contre GERNSTEIN, Kurt,
du chef d'assassinats et complicité.

Vu notre Commission Rogatoire en date du six avril 1945
commettant M^r le Directeur de l'Identité Judiciaire aux fe
de photographier les documents y énumérés.

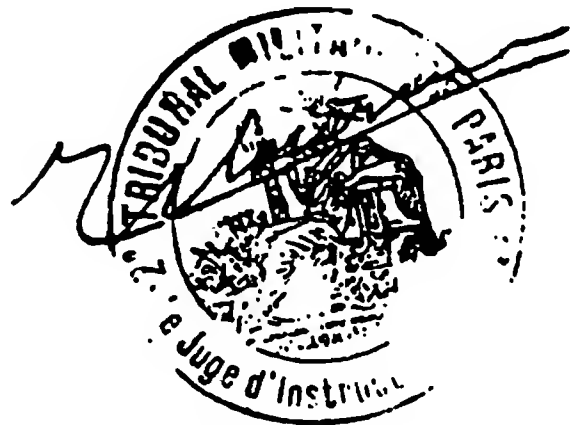
Vu les deux rapports de M^r le Directeur de l'Identité
Judiciaire en date du 9 Octobre 1945, les pièces en
retour et leurs photographies.

XX [Annexons au Dossier de l'information, sous deux enveloppes
portant le cachet du Juge d'Instruction Militaire,
10) les documents dont s'agit - 20) leurs photographies

De tout quoi en dressons le présent procès-verbal
que signons avec notre greffier.

Le Juge d'Instruction Militaire

Le greffier



floor of the cell.

Gerstein's body was laid on a straw mattress. He was dressed in a shirt and trousers. On the forepart of the neck a deep violet-colored furrow is visible which corresponds with the small cord. His face seems calm. One notices on the body no other traces of violence. One notices no traces of a struggle in the cell. (Erasures) The body is still supple. The extremities are becoming cold.

At the prison registry we note as follows the civilian status of the deceased – GERSTEIN (Kurt) born the 11 August 1905 at Munster (Westphalia) of Ludwig and of Clara Schemann, domiciled at Hagen (Westphalia), nationality German. (Signature and stamp)

Document concerning attachment of photocopies to reports

The year one thousand nine hundred and forty-five, the 10 October.

We, Mathieu Mattéi, Commandant of Military Justice, Military Examining Magistrate of the 2nd. Permanent Military Tribunal of Paris

In view of the examination proceedings against GERSTEIN, Kurt, as principle in murders and complicity.

In view of our rogatory commission dated 6 April 1945²⁵ requiring M. the Director of Judicial Identity to photograph the documents enumerated within.

In view of the two reports of M. the Director of Judicial Identity dated 9 October 1945, the documents returned, and their photographs.

We join the file of information, in two envelopes carrying the stamp of the Military Examining Magistrate, 1 The original documents, 2 their photographs, concerning all of which we draw up the present report which we sign with our Court Clerk.

The Military Examining Magistrate (stamp and signature)

The Clerk of the Court (stamp and signature)

Comparative Tables Of the Principle Differences Between the “Confessions”

We have extracted the passages which appeared to us significant in each of the six “confessions” and have placed them side by side in eight columns, making one column for each of the texts indicated in parentheses (TI, TII, TIII, TIV, TVI) and three columns for TV, since this text appears in three versions (T Va, T Vb and T Vc).

A ninth column is reserved for observations: one will find there in particular:

Reflections arising from the phrases quoted;

A statement of the errors and distortions of the texts published by certain authors;

Table A

T I	T II	T III	T IV	T Va	T Vb	T Vc	T VI	Observations
<p>"to the bottom of this sorcerers' pot"</p> <p>...I had only one wish: to see, to see into all this machinery and then: cry out to all the people!</p>	(Identical to T I)	<p>I decided in any event to throw a glance <i>in these ovens and these chambers</i> in order to know what was going on.</p> <p>Gerstein seems to know, <i>in advance</i>, what he will see: ovens and chambers.</p>	(Identical to T I and T II)	<p>...I had only one wish, to see right to the bottom of this sorcerer's pot and to communicate to the people what I see there, be it at the risk of my life.</p>	(Identical to T Va)	(Identical to T Va and T Vb)	<p>...I had only one wish: You must go yourself to see into this devil's cauldron and make known to the people what is happening, even at the risk of your life.</p>	<p>The words "in diese Öfen und Kammern" which mean "into these ovens and these chambers," have been translated by Léon Poliakov and Josef Wulf by "in these places" (IIIe R. et J., page 109).</p> <p>It is surprising that a German Protestant should write in the same tone of the crematorium ovens, widely used in Germany at that period, and the poison gas chambers. Such an attitude would surprise less coming from a Catholic, hostile—at least at that time—to the incineration of cadavers.</p>
<p><i>The recommendations of the Gestapo</i></p> <p>Supplied with two references from the two employees of the Gestapo having dealt with my case, it was not difficult to enter into the SS Army. (Gerstein is making allusion to the two arrests of which he was the object, the one in 1936 at Saarbruck, and the other in 1938 at Stuttgart, this latter having been followed by a stay of some weeks in a concentration camp.)</p>	(Identical to T I)	<p>Almost the same as T I and T II.</p> <p>One additional sentence: These gentlemen were of the opinion that my idealism, which they probably admired, would not fail to serve the Nazi cause.</p>	(Almost the same as T III)	<p>(Almost the same as T III and T IV.)</p> <p>One additional sentence: "It is thus that they themselves showed me the road to take."</p>	(Identical to T Va)	(Identical to T Va and T Vb)	<p>(Almost the same as T Va, T Vb and T Vc)</p>	<p><i>Interrogation of 26 June 1945 by Commandant Beckhardt of O.R.C.G.:</i></p> <p><i>Question:</i> How were you able to join this organization after having been yourself arrested several times by the Gestapo?</p> <p><i>Answer:</i> I did nothing but accept the suggestion that the subalterns of the Gestapo had made me, at the time of my second arrest.</p>
<p><i>Gerstein becomes an officer of the SS</i></p> <p>...For my successes, I succeeded soon to lieutenant.</p> <p>(Gerstein is alluding to his contribution to the work of his disinfection service in stemming, in 1941, a typhus epidemic in the camps.)</p>	(Identical to T I)	<p>By reason of my successes, I <i>soon passed sub-lieutenant and lieutenant</i>. The German text reads: "wurde ich bald Leutnant und Oberleutnant."</p>	(Identical to T I and T II)	<p>Soon, I become sublieutenant, then lieutenant.</p>	(Identical to T Va)	(Identical to T Va and T Vb)	<p>That is why I <i>very quickly</i> became sublieutenant and then lieutenant. The German text reads: "ich wurde daher <i>sehr bald</i> Leutnant und Oberleutnant."</p>	<p>The ranks "Leutnant" and "Oberleutnant" existed in the Wehrmacht, but not in the SS. In reality, Gerstein became soon (bald) or very soon (sehr bald) Untersturmführer (promoted 1st November 1941); on the other hand, it was necessary for him to await the 20th April 1943, that is eight months after his visit to the camps of Belzec and Treblinka, in order to be promoted Obersturmführer.</p> <p>In the texts composed in French, Gerstein gives the equivalent French rank. It is difficult to understand why the incorrect ranks should be given in the texts composed in German.</p>
<p><i>Expulsion? Yes — Execution? No</i></p> <p>...the judge of the NSDAP who had sentenced my <i>expulsion</i>, made great efforts to hunt me...</p>	(Identical to T I)	<p>...the tribunal which had ordered my <i>expulsion</i> from the party had knowledge of my entry into the SS to a positional of command.</p>	<p>December 1941, the tribunal which had ordered my <i>expulsion</i> out of the NSDAP received knowledge of my entry into the SS army.</p>	<p>...the party tribunal that had decided my <i>execution</i>, having learned that I was infiltrated into an E.M. of SS. (E.M. = État-Major = Staff Officer.) Let us remember T Va was written out by the French service of O.R.C.G.</p>	(Identical to T Va)	<p>(Identical to T Va and T Vb)</p> <p>In conformity with its original, that is T Vb, the English translation reads: — my execution — E.M. of the S.S. (The initials E.M. are meaningless in English.)</p>	(Almost the same as T III)	<p>In text V: Execution, in place of Expulsion. This is an example of the poor quality of this text, which was not composed by Gerstein. The writers of this report of the interrogation have misread the writing or misunderstood the answers of the accused, who did not, moreover, put his signature to the various pages of the interrogation.</p>
<p><i>Prussic acid: 100 kgs or 265 kgs?</i></p> <p>...He (Guenther) gave me the order to take 100 kgs of prussic acid...</p>	(Identical to T I)	<p>He (Günther) gave me the order to have brought <i>immediately for an ultra-secret mission</i> relating to the Reich 100 kg of prussic acid...</p>	<p>He (Günther) gave me the order to obtain at once 260 kg of prussic acid for an extremely secret purpose...</p>	<p>"With many mysterious allusions, he (Günther) gives me the order to obtain for him 260 kgs of prussic acid..."</p>	(Identical to T Va)	(Identical to T Va and T Vb)	(Almost the same as T III)	<p>100 kgs or 260 kgs? The difference is unexplained. To Commandant Mattéi, examining magistrate at the Military Tribunal of Paris who interrogated him the 19 July 1945, Gerstein replied that he had himself fixed the quantity according to the load capacity of the vehicle with which he travelled. This is a contradiction with the whole of the "confessions" where Gerstein speaks of having received an order.</p>
<p><i>The rumor of Kollin (Bohemia-Moravia)</i></p> <p>(Nothing)</p>	(Nothing)	<p>At the factory at Collin, I had purposely thrown out hints that the acid was intended to kill human beings.</p>	<p>At Collin I had given to understand that the acid was intended to kill people.</p>	<p>"At Kollin, in the prussic acid factory, I made it clear to the personnel, by maladroit technical questions, that the prussic acid was intended to kill human beings. I did the same thing each time, this being the best way to start rumors among the people."</p>	(Identical to T Va)	(Identical to T Va and T Vb)	<p>At Kollin, I had given to understand, by purposely maladroit technical questions to the <i>Czech</i> personnel of the factory, that the hydrocyanic acid was intended to kill human beings. (The continuation is identical to T Va)</p>	<p>If Gerstein really acted as he says he did, one can think that the Czech workers took him for a provocateur. Is he not frightened of possible informers? In other passages, he professes himself to be very prudent because of the risks of reprisals against him and his family.</p>

Table B

T I	T II	T III	T IV	T Va	T Vb	T Vc	T VI	Observations
The SS General Globocnik is too trusting. <i>Having still a place in the car, I had taken with me the SS Obersturmbannführer Professor Dr. Pfannenstiel. Globocnik says to us: This thing is one of the most secret that there is. Anyone who speaks of it will be shot immediately. Yesterday, two talkers died.</i>	(Very close to T I) It is specified: this thing... <i>and even the most secret.</i>	With us, rather by chance, was Professor Pfannenstiel... (Follows very closely T II)	(Almost the same as T III)	A place being free in the car in question, I am accompanied by the SS Obersturmbannführer Professor Doctor Pfannenstiel... —Follows T III very closely	(Identical to T Va)	(Identical to T Va and T Vb)	(Almost the same as T V)	Charged with an <i>ultra-secret mission</i> , he says, Gerstein takes in his car a passenger whom he does not know. The General Globocnik who, it seems, <i>has never previously met either Gerstein or Pfannenstiel</i> does not hesitate, from the first contact, to speak openly to them of the “biggest secret of the State.” A disarming candor from all concerned, if there really were ultrasecret matters.
<i>Did Gerstein visit... Maidanek? Did he visit Sobibor?</i> 1 Belzec (seen!) 2 Sobibor (not seen!) 3 Treblinka (seen) 4 Maidanek ... (seen in preparation)	(Identical to T I)	1 Belzec 2 Sobibor 3 Treblinka 4 Maidanek <i>Belzec, Treblinka and Maidanek</i> I personally inspected, accompanied by...	1 Belzec 2 Sobibor <i>not seen!</i> 3 Treblinka seen! 4 Maidanek seen in preparation.	1 Belzec 2 Sobibor 3 Treblinka 4 Maidanek Accompanied by the head of all these death factories, the captain of police Wirth, I thoroughly inspected all these places <i>with the exception of Maidanek.</i>	(Identical to T Va)	(Almost the same as T Va and T Vb) In the English text, one reads: “Except the last, I visited...”	1 Belzec 2 Sobibor 3 Treblinka 4 Maidanek I have visited <i>Belzec, Treblinka and Maidanek</i> accompanied by the Head of all these installations for putting to death, the Captain of Police Wirth, in a thorough manner and while functioning.	Maidanek (seen in 5 out of 6 texts), Sobibor (seen in 1 text out of 6): the contradiction is unexplained. It has escaped Léon Poliakov who writes (M.J. 1964, page 7) in juxtaposing extracts from two confessions: “1 Belzec (seen!) 3 Treblinka seen 2 Sobibor not seen 4 Maidanek .. seen in preparation. With the exception of this last, I have inspected in detail all the camps...” Saul Friedlander has recopied Léon Poliakov (K.G. page 99).
<i>What have the Danish people got to do here?</i> “...ten or twenty times the result of the Spinnstoff-Sammlung (textiles collection), which was done only to conceal the origin of clothing...”	(Identical to T I)	The collection of textiles has in fact been done only in order to explain the origin of the clothes for the workers in the East, <i>etc.</i> ... and present them as the outcome of the sacrifice accepted by the German people.	All this collection is only made to conceal the origin of Jewish clothes, Polish, Czech, etc. Truly, the result of our installations is 10-20 times that of all these collections!	If every year we collect clothes among the <i>Danish people</i> , that is only done to camouflage...	(Identical to T Va)	(Almost the same as T Va and T Vb) In this accurate English translation, one reads: “...clothes among <i>the Danes</i> ”	All these collections are only made for the essential purpose of making plausible in some way for the foreign workers and the <i>German people</i> the origin...	Danish people, instead of German people: this is a new example of the poor quality of T V. Perhaps a careless transcriber read in a handwritten German text “danisch” (Danish) instead of “deutsch” (German)?
<i>Gerstein gives details of the disinfection of the clothing.</i> (nothing)	(nothing)	I afterwards discussed with firms capable of this work the possibility of disinfecting such quantities of textiles — which related to a stock alone of about 40,000 tons — 60 full trains of merchandise — in the existing laundries and disinfection establishments. But it was completely impossible to place such large orders. I put to profit all these negotiations to make known or let cleverly be understood the fact of the murder of the Jews. Globocnik then expressed himself satisfied that all this heap should be sprayed with detenoline so that it would have the smell of disinfection — which was then done.	(nothing)	(nothing)	(nothing)	(nothing)	(nothing)	This passage only exists in T III. It is in the form of a handwritten half page carrying, at the top on the left, the mention “zu 7.” This half page is inserted between the half page numbered 7 and the half page numbered 8. This insertion in T III of a rather technical handwritten text which has no equivalent in the other “confessions” gives rise to the reflections which we shall develop in our chapter: Authenticity of the “confessions.”
<i>Lindner or Linden?</i> Then the Ministerialdirektor Dr. Lindner of Innenministerium...	(Identical to T I)	The ministerial counsellor, Dr. Herbert <i>Lindner</i> who accompanied him ¹ ... 1. Hitler.	(nothing)	He (Hitler) was accompanied by the ministerial counsellor, Dr. Herbert <i>Linden</i> ...	(Identical to T Va)	(Identical to T Va and T Vb)	“In his company ¹ there was also the ministerial Counsellor Dr. Herbert <i>Linden</i> of the Ministry of the Reich.”	The ministerial counsellor was named <i>Linden</i> and not Lindner. In all the texts, it is written that Dr. Linden accompanied Hitler on his visit of 15 August 1942 (<i>the day before yesterday</i> , as Gerstein visits Belzec on 17 August. Léon Poliakov, for a reason unknown to us, writes: “The Dr. Herbert Lindner who was with us <i>yesterday</i> [that is to say 16 August, the day after the pretended visit of Hitler] (Brévière de la Haine, 1951, 221; 1960, 221; 1974, 292; 1979, 221; <i>Monde Juif</i> , 1954, 7.) Hans Rothfels has <i>historically</i> established that Hitler did not leave his GHQ of the Eastern Front on 15 August 1942.
<i>Dimensions of the garages</i> After having mounted a small stairway, to the right and the left, three and three rooms like garages, 4x5m, 1.90 in height.	(Identical to T I)	...a small stairway and afterwards to right and to left respectively three rooms of 5x5 meters, 1.90 m high, with <i>doors of wood</i> like garages. (Note the simple doors of wood.)	(nothing)	...only the gas chambers coming to the right of the corridor situated in the “bathhouse.” To right and to left, three rooms like garages 5x5m and 1.90 high.	(Identical to T Va)	(Identical to T Va and T Vb)	In the bathroom itself, set one side and the other of a corridor, three rooms on each side, almost like garages, of 5x5 meters in area and 1.90m in height.	In the “confessions” after T I, Gerstein speaks of a gas chamber of 25 m ² . Thus the dimensions of 5mx5m are more plausible than those of 4mx5m. The height is 1m90, which gives a volume of 47.5m ³ . Further on, the engineer speaks of 45m ³ . Please note that Gerstein does not qualify his various dimensions with the adverb about. Léon Poliakov suppresses this passage without notifying his readers (<i>op. cit.</i>)
<i>Brass or wrought iron?</i> On the roof, the star of David in brass.	(Identical to T I)	On the roof, by way of a “subtle joke,” the star of David!	(nothing)	We then find ourselves in front of a building like a bath-institute with a <i>little stairway of wrought iron</i> . (No star of David.)	(Identical to T Va)	(Identical to T Va and T Vb)	On the roof, <i>in the guise of a weathervane</i> , the star of David in wrought iron. (The star of David has here a utilitarian role; it is a weathervane.)	It is a minor detail of the “confessions.” But we shall never know whether the star of David was in brass or wrought iron. In T V, there is no star of David; it is the stairway which is in wrought iron.

Table C

T I	T II	T III	T IV	T Va	T Vb	T Vc	T VI	Observations
<p>The submarines will stop prowling in the sea.</p> <p>(Nothing)</p>	<p>(Nothing)</p>	<p>(Nothing)</p>	<p>(Nothing)</p>	<p>At this moment already, <i>I predict to everybody</i> that soon the submarines will stop prowling the sea, for the most efficient army must lose its fighting spirit if it has been stained with rivers of innocent blood. In fact, events proved me right a little time afterwards.</p>	<p>(Identical to T Va)</p>	<p>(Identical to T Va and T Vb)</p>	<p><i>I foretold even then to many people</i> that these submarines would soon navigate no longer, because this weapon so ingenious would become blunted if it were stained with floods of innocent blood. <i>God would arrange things</i> in such a way: that they would not work any more. And, in fact, a little time later, events proved me right!</p>	<p>These verbal imprudences of “God’s spy,” so-called by Pierre Joffroy, recall the rumor of Kollin, which we have previously mentioned. How can we fail to notice the messianic tone of these passages?</p>
<p>Gerstein joins in with the prayers of the victims.</p> <p>A great many say their prayers.</p>	<p>(Identical to T I)</p>	<p>Many pray. I pray with them. I squeeze myself into a corner and I cry in a loud voice to my god and to theirs. How I would have loved to go into the chambers with them, how I would have loved to die their death. They would then have found an SS officer in uniform in their chambers. They would have interpreted and treated the affair as an accident and it would have been quietly shelved. But I still do not have the right, I must first reveal what I see here!</p>	<p>(Nothing)</p>	<p>Some turn towards me: “Oh, Mister, help us, help us!” Many pray. I cannot yet give them help. I pray with them, I press myself into a corner and I cry to their God and to my God <i>in a loud voice</i>. I can permit myself this; there is enough noise around me. With what joy would I not have gone toward them into this chamber, with what joy would I not have died their death. On finding an SS officer in uniform in their chamber, the murderers would never have supposed that that could be a protest on my part. They would have considered it an accident and my epitaph would have been: ‘Dead for his beloved Führer, in execution of his important duty for the Führer.’ No, that won’t do. I do not yet have the right to yield to the temptation to die with these people. I know enough about it. Wirth has told me: “There are not ten persons who have seen what I have seen and who will see it: the auxiliary foreign personnel will be executed at the end.” I am <i>one of the five men</i> who have seen all these installations. There is certainly not one of them, apart from me, who sees this as an adversary, as an enemy of this gang of murderers; so, I must still live to cry out what I have seen here. Truly, this must be much more difficult, I must live and make it known.</p>	<p>(Identical to T Va)</p>	<p>(Identical to T Va and T Vb)</p>	<p>Some address themselves to me: Oh, Mister, help us, but help us! Many pray. But I cannot help them, I pray with them, I squeeze myself into a corner and cry in a loud voice to my God and to theirs. There is enough noise around me, I can allow myself to cry in a loud voice to my God. How I would have wished to enter the death chambers with them; how I would have wished to share their death. They would then have found an SS officer in uniform in their chambers; they would not have protested for that; they would have considered the thing an accident; one would have announced in reference to me: “Died in service for his beloved Führer faithfully served in the execution of an important task for the Reichsführer...” No, that won’t do. I cannot yet yield to the temptation to die with these people. I know it well: there are not 10 persons who see what I see and what I have seen, who have a view of the whole here, on all the installations and their organization. Certainly, not one apart from me sees this as an adversary, as an enemy of this gang of murderers. So I must live and first of all make known what I see here. To be sure, this is the most difficult service, very difficult!”</p>	<p>The brevity of the texts of 26 April contrasts with the lyricism of the texts of 6 May. Text III, text of 4 May presents a “reasonable” digest of the rather delirious passages of 6 May.</p> <p>In a handwritten note in English given by Gerstein to the Allied investigators on 5 May 1945, one reads notably: “I have seen, no more than 5 others have seen, and these were nazies.” In a document found after Gerstein’s death, numbered 12 by the military Examining Magistrate and “mislaid” between the Military Justice department and the Judicial Identity Service, where it should have been photographed, the first words have been preserved: “Four witnesses” and the last word: “prison.” Gerstein was going to express, in this document, the same idea as in the note in English.</p> <p>Léon Poliakov has quoted a passage of T V in the review <i>Le Monde Juif</i> (1964, January/March, page 8) which he reproduces very approximately. In fact, he has suppressed the following phrases, without informing his readers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. “I can permit myself this; there is enough noise around me.”2. “...the murderers would never have supposed that that could be a protest on my part.”3. “...and my epitaph would have been: ‘dead for his well-loved Fuehrer, in execution of his important duty for the Fuehrer.’” <p>In addition, instead of “I am one of the five men who have seen...” Léon Poliakov writes “...I am one of the rare men who have seen...”</p>
<p>Almost 150 persons per freight car. Truly after some minutes, the first train arrived from Lemberg. 45 cars, containing 6,700 persons, 1,450 already dead on their arrival...200 Ukrainians...wrench open the doors and with leather horsewhips, they chase the people out of the cars.</p>	<p>(Identical to T I)</p>	<p>(Almost the same as T I and T II)</p>	<p>(Nothing)</p>	<p>(Almost the same as the preceding texts)</p>	<p>(Identical to T Va)</p>	<p>(Identical to T Va and T Vb)</p>	<p>(Almost the same as T V)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. 6,700 persons in 45 freight cars, this is a constant in five texts out of six. Léon Poliakov writes: “45 cars, containing more than 6,000 persons (<i>Bréviaire de la Haine</i>, 1951, 222; 1960, 222; 1974, 293; 1979, 222. <i>Le Monde Juif</i>, 1964, 8).2. The Ukrainians chase the <i>people</i>: — in the German texts: Leute; — in the English text: people. Léon Poliakov writes: “...they chased the Jews...” (<i>op. cit.</i>)3. Léon Poliakov has suppressed the phrase: “1,450 already dead on their arrival.” (<i>Bréviaire de la Haine</i>, same bibliographical references as above.)

Table D

T I	T II	T III	T IV	T Va	T Vb	T Vc	T VI	Observations
<p>The little boy and his lengths of string (In the background, a pile of shoes of varying height) ...With small string, given by a little Jewish boy of 3–4 years, to join together the shoes...</p>	(Almost the same as T I)	<p>“Carefully tie up the shoes (for the clothing collection), because, in the pile <i>more than 25 meters high</i>, no one would have been able to retrieve the pairs. (No little boy.)</p>	(Nothing)	<p><i>A little Jewish boy of three years</i> receives an armful of strings which he distributes <i>thoughtfully</i> to the others; it is intended to tie the shoes together, for never could anyone retrieve the assorted pairs in a pile <i>35 to 40 meters high</i>.</p>	(Identical to T Va)	Identical to T Va and T Vb, <i>except the last phrase</i> which in the English text reads: “in a heap of boots of several meters.”	Under the arm of a little Jewish boy, someone presses a handful of strings, which the child of three years, <i>distraught</i> , distributes to people: to tie the shoes together! For, in the pile of <i>35 or 40 meters</i> high, no one could have afterwards retrieved the matching shoes.	The little boy of 3 years “distraught” (T VI), distributes the strings “thoughtfully” (T V). Is he alone in this distribution to 5,250 living deportees who just descended from the train? Gerstein speaks only of him. In August 1942, Gerstein was himself father of a little boy of 2½ years. § The pile of shoes was 35 to 40m (T V and T VI) or 25 m (T III)? In the one case as in the other, it is difficult to imagine that one could place a pair of shoes at a height between 7 and 12 stories. § Léon Poliakov has suppressed the sentence concerning the little boy (<i>op. cit.</i> , 1951, 1960, 1979, page 222; 1974, page 293).
<p>Thirty persons standing on 1m² ... The naked men are <i>standing</i> on each other’s feet, 700–800 to 25 m², 45 m³! The doors close. ... the men in the four chambers already filled live, live, 4 times 750 persons to 4 times 45m³!”</p>	(Identical to T I)	<p>The people are so squeezed together that they are trampling on each other’s feet, <i>700–800 on 25 square meters, in 45 cubic meters</i>. The SS men press them physically one against the other as much as they can. The doors close. ... the people remain alive in these 4 chambers, 4 times 750 persons in 4 times 45 cubic meters.</p>	(Nothing)	<p>They are stepping on one another’s feet. From <i>700 to 800</i> human beings on <i>25m²</i>, on <i>45m³</i>. I recapitulate, more than half are children, average weight maximum 30 kgs, specific weight 1, thus <i>25,250</i> kgs of men per chamber. Wirth is right; with the help of the SS, 750 persons can be stowed in 45m³ and the SS help with their whips and put in the oven as much as physically possible. The doors close. [Please note the average unit weight of 30kgs and the total weight <i>stated</i> of 25,250 kgs. But 25,250 is not divisible by 30.]</p>	(Identical to T Va)	(Identical to T Va and T Vb)	<p>The people are stepping on each other’s feet, 700 to 800 persons on 25 meters square in 45 cubic meters. I make an estimate: average weight at the most 35 kg, more than half are children, specific weight 1, thus 25,250 kg of human beings per chamber. Wirth is right, if the SS men push a little, one can make 750 persons enter in 45 cubic meters! And the SS men push them, with their horsewhips and compel them to enter, as much as is physically possible. The doors close. [Note the average unit weight of 35 kg. this time (not 30) and the <i>precise</i> total weight of 25,250 kg. But 25,250 isn’t divisible by 35 either.]</p>	700 to 800 persons standing on 25m², in 45m³, is a <i>constant</i> of the “confessions.” There are many non-revisionist authors who have changed either the surface area, or the number of persons, and suppressed the cubic volume. The following list is not exhaustive: Léon Poliakov replaces the 25m² by 93m² and eliminates <i>on two occasions</i> the 45m3 (<i>op. cit.</i> 1951, 1960, 1979, page 223; 1974, page 294; <i>M.J.</i> 1964, page 9); he does not say they are <i>standing</i> . Saul Friedländer (<i>op. cit.</i> , page 106) and François Delpech (<i>Hist. et Geo.</i> 1979, page 630) have recopied Léon Poliakov. Gideon Hausner realistically rounds off at 100m² the surface area given by Léon Poliakov (<i>Just Jerus.</i> French translation, page 228). Lucy S. Dawidowicz writes that each Jew had “one square foot,” which would given 67.5m2 for 750 persons (<i>War against the Jews</i> , page 148). The French translation of the book suggests 30cm²(!) per person (<i>op. cit.</i> page 240). Robert Neumann respects the m² and the m³; but he brings down the number of victims from 700/800 to <i>170/180</i> , repeating the discrepancy some lines further on by writing “the people are living...four times 175 persons in four times 45m³ (Hitler/ <i>Aufst. u. Unterg.</i> page 192).
<p>Gerstein records the times carefully ...Heckenholt [operator of the Diesel motor] endeavors to get the Diesel going. But, it does not work! Hauptmann Wirth arrives. One sees, he is frightened, because me, I see the disaster. Yes, I see and wait. My ‘stop’ watch has timed everything — 50 minutes, 70 minutes — the Diesel does not work! The men are waiting in their chamber. ...After 2 hours 49 minutes — the “stop” watch has recorded everything — the Diesel starts. ... Again 25 minutes pass: a great many, it is true, are dead. One sees by the little window through which the electric light allows one to see, for a moment, the interior of the chamber. After 28 minutes still a few who survive, after 32, finally, all are dead!</p>	(Almost the same as T I)	<p>...Heckenholt is the operator of the diesel engine... But the diesel does not work! Captain Wirth arrives. One sees that he is annoyed that it should have to happen today just when I am here. Yes, I see everything and I wait. My stopwatch has cleverly recorded everything. 50 minutes, 70 minutes, the Diesel does not start. The people wait in their gas chambers... At the end of 2 hours 49 minutes — the stopwatch has recorded everything — the Diesel starts. ... Once more, 25 minutes pass ... many are now dead, one sees it through the small window in which the electric light illuminates the chamber for an instant. At the end of 28 minutes only some still live, at the end of 32 minutes everyone is dead.</p>	(Nothing)	<p>...<i>Hockelchoc</i>¹ is the operator of the diesel... But the diesel machine does not work. I am told this is quite rare. Wirth arrives. One sees that it is painful to him that the should happen just today when I am there. Yes, I see everything and I hear everything; my watch has recorded everything well, 50 minutes, 70 minutes, the diesel does not start; humanity is waiting in these chambers in vain. One hears them weep and sob “like in the synagogue” remarks Professor Pfannenstiel who has glued his ear against the wooden door. Captain Wirth beats with a whip the Ukrainian who should help Hockelchoc in the start-up of the diesel. After 2 hours and 49 minutes, my stopwatch has recorded it, the diesel starts. ... Another 25 minutes pass. It is true that many are dead; one sees through the little window illuminating the chamber for an instant with electric light. <i>Wirth has interviewed me in detail in order to know whether I consider it preferable to let these people die in a dark room or a lighted one. He asks this in the same tone that one asks: ‘Do you prefer to sleep with or without a cushion? Do you like your coffee with or without milk?’</i>² 28 minutes later, rare are those who still live. Finally, after 32 minutes, all are dead; I am told that this is the normal time in order to kill.</p> <p>1. Hockelchoc on three occasions in the text instead of Heckenholt: one example among others of the poor quality of T Va, a text drawn up by the O.R.C.G. 2. Astonishing reflections by Gerstein regarding a hardly credible question from Wirth.</p>	(Identical to T Va with one small exception: One reads: 26 minutes instead of 28; one can think that this is a typing error.)	(Identical to T Vb) One finds again here the 26 minutes, which is normal since T Vc is the English translation of T Vb.	<p>Heckenholt is the operator of the diesel... But the diesel was not working. This happened relatively seldom, I am told. Captain Wirth arrives. One can see that it is unpleasant to him that this happens just today, when I am here. But, yes, I see everything! And I wait. My stopwatch has quietly recorded everything. 50 minutes, 70 minutes, the diesel does not start! The people are waiting in their gas chambers... At the end of 2 hours 49 minutes — the stopwatch has recorded everything — the diesel starts... Again 25 minutes pass. It is accurate, many are dead now. One sees it through the little spy-window, through which the electric light illuminates the chamber for an instant. Wirth had questioned me minutely to know whether I found it better to make people die in a lighted room or without light. He asked this in the tone in which one asks whether one sleeps better with or without a bolster. At the end of 28 minutes, only some survived. Finally, at the end of 32 minutes, all are dead.</p>	Gerstein was charged by an SS General to proceed with the disinfection large quantities of textiles; he stays <i>only one</i> day at Belzec. But he seems to have had the time to stay <i>inactive</i> for 3 hours 21 minutes (2.49 + 32 minutes), his eye fixed either on his stopwatch, or on the spy-window where he follows the progress of death in the gas chambers. He is impassive, when just a little while before he was praying with the victims and was wishing to experience the same death as them. His precise timing with the stopwatch is hardly reconcilable with the supposed “errors” in the surface area and volume of the gas chamber, which presumably were due to a very profound emotion. Léon Poliakov has deleted one of the data of the timekeeping, namely, the following phrase: “...after 28 minutes, yet few who survive” (<i>Brev. de la H.</i> , 1951, 1960, 1979, page 223; 1974, page 294.) Joe J. Heydecker and Johannes Leeb have replaced the 2 hours 40 minutes, length of the breakdown of the diesel, by “nach etwa 49 Minuten” (after about 49 minutes); the form of words is surprising enough, for 49 minutes denote a precise length of time; as for the adverb “about,” it eliminates any possibility of a typographical error (<i>Nürnb. Proz.</i> , page 460).

Table E

T I	T II	T III	T IV	T Va	T Vb	T Vc	T VI	Observations
Is this the work of a dentist? ...Two dozen <i>workers</i> busy themselves checking the mouths, which they open by means of iron hooks.	(Identical to T I)	...Two dozen <i>dentists</i> busy themselves checking the mouths with hooks...	(Nothing)	Two dozen <i>dentists</i> open the mouths with hooks and look for gold.	(Identical to T Va)	(Identical to T Va and T Vb)	(Identical to T Va, T Vb, and T Vc)	Professor Hans Rothfels (V.j.H. page 191 note 47) has expressed doubts on the qualifications as dentists of these members of the working parties. Reproducing T III, which was composed in German, he writes: "Workers, that seems more credible, in the French text." How to explain that in his mother tongue Gerstein uses a less suitable word than in the French language, with which he was not familiar?
Conditions favorable for the development of an epidemic. ...Then the naked cadavers were thrown into large pits of 100 x 20 x 12 meters, <i>situated near the death chambers</i> After some days, the bodies swelled and the whole rose 2-3 meters by means of the gas which formed in the cadavers. After some days, the swelling finished, the bodies fell together. Next day, the pits were filled again and <i>covered with 10 cm of sand</i> . <i>Some time later — I heard —</i> grills were made of railway lines and the cadavers were burned by means of diesel oil and petrol, to make the cadavers disappear." ["Some time later, I heard." Thus, this is not eyewitness evidence; moreover, Gerstein stayed only one day at Belzec.]	(Identical to T I)	...The naked cadavers were <i>hauled on wooden barrows</i> ¹ nearby into pits of 100 by 20 by 12 meters. After a few days the bodies swelled, but a little later they settled so that it was possible to throw on another layer. Then they were covered with 10 cm of sand from which some heads and arms emerged. 1. In the German text: "Holztragen." ...Later another decision was taken. The cadavers were burned with the aid of gasoline and diesel oil on big improvised grills made with railway rails.	(Nothing)	...The naked cadavers were <i>thrown some meters further away</i> , into pits of 100 x 12 x 20 meters. Some days later, these cadavers swell and afterwards collapse heavily, which permits recovering them with a new layer; about <i>10 cm of sand</i> is thrown on top; <i>there are only a few arms and a few heads sticking out</i> ." Even the cadavers already buried were burned on grills made with rails with the aid of petrol and heavy oils.	(Identical to T Va)	(Identical to T Va and T Vb)	The naked corpses, <i>on wooden carts</i> ¹ , were <i>thrown</i> into 100 x 12 x 20 meter pits <i>a distance of only a few meters away</i> . After some days, fermentation made the cadavers swell, then they collapsed heavily a short time afterwards, so that a new layer could be thrown on top, then <i>about 10 cm of sand</i> was spread on top, with the result that <i>only a few isolated heads and arms stuck out</i> . 1. In the German text: "Holzwagen." ...The cadavers were then burned with the help of petrol and diesel oil on gigantic grills improvised with railway rails.	At the beginning of his "confessions," Gerstein told us that he was promoted to SS-officer in November 1941, as a reward for his successes in the struggle against the epidemics in the camps. Ten months later, he describes for us a situation in the camp at Belzec which would have favored the development of contagious diseases, from which the SS guards and their auxiliaries would not have been safe. Léon Poliakov deleted the following phrase: "Next day, the ditches were filled again and covered with 10 cm of sand" (<i>op. cit.</i> 1951, 1960, 1979, page 224; 1974, page 295 / <i>op. cit.</i> 1964, page 9.) Joe J. Heydecker and Johannes Leeb made an addition of their own invention placed between brackets. One reads: "Die Leichen sind dann (<i>bei Annäherung der Russen</i>) wieder ausgegraben und auf großen Rosten u.s.w.," which means, "The cadavers were then (as the Russians drew near) disinterred and on large grills, etc." (<i>op. cit.</i> page 459). During the war, Germany reserved its motor fuel for military vehicles. Burning cadavers by the hundreds of thousands would have necessitated very large quantities of petrol and heavy oils. The historian André Brissaud writes, in connection with the incineration of the bodies of Hitler and Eva Braun in the garden of the Chancellery: "180 liters of petrol could not accomplish the incineration of the bones" (<i>Hist. et O.N.</i> page 393). Were any mountains of bones found at the Belzec camp after the war?

Table F

T I	T II	T III	T IV	T Va	T Vb	T Vc	T VI	Observations
<p>The number of victims at Belzec and Treblinka</p> <p>At Belzec and at Treblinka, one did not give oneself the trouble to count in a fairly accurate manner the number of men killed. If one had found the passports etc....it would have related to a very small part of all the number dead. Most died nameless.</p> <p>[No estimate of the number of dead.]</p>	<p>At Belcek and at Treblinka, no one took the trouble to count in a reasonably exact manner the number of men killed. The numbers, made known by <i>Britisch Broadcasting Co. Radio</i> are not accurate, in truth it will be a matter altogether of approx. 25,000,000 men!</p>	<p>Neither at Belzec nor at Treblinka <i>did</i> anyone take the trouble to record or count the dead. The numbers were calculated only approximately from the content of the cars.</p> <p>[No estimate of the number dead.]</p>	(Nothing)	<p>This "factory" [Belzec] has been working since 1942 and "manufactures" about 11,000 dead per day. When the circle of my friends or myself heard the broadcast from London or the Voice of America we were often surprised by the innocent angels who spoke of hundreds of thousands of deads when in reality there were already more than <i>ten million</i>. In the year 1943, the Dutch Resistance told me through Ubbink that I was requested not to supply <i>invented atrocities</i>, but to content myself with reproducing the exact truth; despite my pointing out these things, in August 1942, at the Swedish embassy in Berlin, <i>people refused to believe these figures</i>. Unfortunately, <i>I reply to it under oath</i>, these figures are exact.</p> <p>According to my unquestionable documents, I estimate the number of defenseless human beings murdered by Adolf Hitler and Heinrich Himmler at about 20 million.</p>	(Identical to T Va)	(Identical to T Va and T Vb)	<p>This installation [Belzec] has been functioning since April 1942 and effects on average 1,000 killings¹ per day. When I and my circle of friends listened to the radio of London or the voice of America, we were often astonished by these innocent angels who came up with figures of hundreds of thousands of dead, whereas there were <i>already tens of millions</i> of them.² The Dutch resistance movement had asked me in 1943 through Graduate Engineer Ubbink of Doesburg not to supply them with atrocities <i>but the facts of the strictest authenticity</i>. Although I transmitted these things in August 1942 to the Swedish Legation in Berlin, apparently <i>no one wanted to believe these figures at all</i>. And nevertheless they are true, <i>I attest to it under oath</i>. I estimate the number of those who, defenseless and unarmed, have been murdered at the instigation of Adolf Hitler and Heinrich Himmler, drawn without any possibility of resistance into those murderous traps where they were put to death, as at least 20,000,000 human beings.</p> <p>1. 1,000 in T VI instead of 11,000 in T V. Perhaps this is a typing error in T VI?</p> <p>2. One reads in German "Zig Millionen" which is between 20 (zwanzig) and 90 (neunzig) million.</p>	<p>Number of victims at Belzec and Treblinka:</p> <p>— 25 million in T II</p> <p>— 20 million in T V and T VI.</p> <p>These figures are unrealistic.</p> <p>Gerstein tells us himself that no one believed him in 1942, neither the Anglo-Saxon allies, nor the Dutch resistance, nor the Swedish diplomats. It seems that no one believed him after the war either, on this point at least, for the authors are rare who have reproduced all or part of this passage of the "confessions." The preference has been given to the corresponding passage of T III, which is conspicuous for its restraint.</p> <p>Gerstein does not hesitate to testify under oath to figures which no one can believe to be correct, which, moreover, he hardly had any possibility of estimating.</p>
<p>Captain Wirth does not wish any change</p> <p>Hauptmann Wirth begged me not to propose to Berlin any other method whatsoever and to leave all as it was.</p>	(Almost the same as T I)	<p>Captain Wirth begged me not to propose any modification whatsoever in his installations which had proven themselves.</p>	(Nothing)	<p>Wirth asks me not to propose to Berlin modifications in the methods of death in the gas chambers employed up to the present time for they proven themselves. <i>What is curious is that no one has asked me a single question in Berlin.</i></p>	(Identical to T Va)	(Identical to T Va and T Vb)	(Almost the same as T V)	<p>Let us recall what Gerstein told us of the "ultra-secret mission":</p> <p>— on 8 June 1942, Günther gives him the order to transport a substantial quantity (sometimes 100 kgs, sometimes 260 kgs, according to the texts) to Lublin, in Poland;</p> <p>— on 17 August 1942, General Globocnik says to Gerstein: "It is necessary to find a more toxic gas for our installations."</p> <p>— on 18 August 1942, that is to say the next day, Wirth, commandant of the Belzec camp but <i>subordinate</i> to General Globocnik, says to Gerstein: "Do not change anything in our installations which are working well."</p> <p>Gerstein finds it "curious" (in T V and T VI) that no one has asked a single question on his return to Berlin. We do, too. Gerstein, twice arrested for anti-state activities before the war, threatened in December 1941 with expulsion from the SS, is charged six months later with an ultrasecret mission. He does not fulfill his mission and no one asks for a report.</p> <p>Commandant Mattéi, Military Examining Magistrate in Paris, could not accept this explanation of the accused Gerstein, whom he took for a Nazi anxious to dissemble the truth.</p>

Table G

T I	T II	T III	T IV	T Va	T Vb	T Vc	T VI	Observations
<p>What happened to the prussic acid? I lied that the prussic acid was already destroyed by the transport and very dangerous and to be forced to bury the acid which was done immediately.</p>	(Almost the same as T I)	As for the prussic acid, <i>I had it buried under my supervision</i> while giving as a reason that it had begun to decompose.	(Nothing)	"I <i>had</i> the prussic acid which I had brought <i>buried</i> ."	(Identical to T Va)	(Identical to T Va and T Vb)	(Very close to T V)	<p>To Commandant Mattéi, who interrogates him in Paris 19.7.45, Gerstein replies: "...I duly transported the cyanide but the cyanide did not arrive at destination. On leaving, the cyanide was put in forty-five steel bottles. On the road one of them was emptied under my care with all the necessary precautions because it was dangerous. The forty-four bottles which remained were not taken to the camp of BELCEC but were concealed by the driver and myself at about twelve hundred meters from the camp." Further on, referring to the driver as "accomplice," Gerstein says: "Before the journey, I did not know the driver who was to drive me. The driver belonged to the central security service, I lost touch with him afterwards." Let us note that Gerstein says to Commandant Mattéi that he himself concealed (sic) the forty-four bottles of acid with the help of the driver, whereas one reads in his "confessions" that he <i>had the acid buried, under his supervision</i>. A heavy task to get rid of 44 bottles of acid.</p> <p>Continuing the subject of prussic acid or hydrocyanide, marketed under the brand name Zyklon B and utilized as a disinfectant by the German army since 1917, Mattéi asks Gerstein the following question: "How was the cyanide to have been used technically for extermination?" Astonishing reply of Gerstein: "<i>Gunther</i> at Berlin did not have the slightest idea about it. He supposed that I must have some idea. But in reality I did not because I have never used cyanide except for disinfection."</p>
<p>Treblinka: a simple replica of Belzec? The setup at this place of death was almost the same as at Belzec, but yet bigger — 8 gas chambers and real mountains of clothes and underwear of 35-40 meters high. [Here, the pile of 35-40 meters, that is, 10-12 stories, consists of clothing and underwear and is located at Treblinka. Previously, it was a question of a pile of shoes of similar height located at Belzec, but neither T I nor T II made mention of it.]</p>	(Identical to T I)	The installation was almost the same, but much larger than at Belzec. Eight gas chambers and real mountains of suitcases, clothing, and underwear.	(Nothing)	(Almost the same as T III)	(Identical to T Va)	(Identical to T Va and T Vb)	(Very close to T III)	Gaschambers at Treblinka? This was not the opinion of the Grand Tribunal of Nürnberg; according to that, the Jews were not gassed at Treblinka, but were plunged in boiling water (Document PS-3311).
<p>The mysterious affair of von Otter After some weeks, I saw <i>one more time</i> the Legation Counsellor von Otter. He told me that he had made his report to the government (of) Sweden, a report which, according to his words, had <i>great influence</i> on the relations of Sweden and Germany."</p>	After some weeks, I saw the Baron de Otter again <i>two times</i> . He told me that he had made his report..." (Continuation identical to T I)	I later met Herr von Otter <i>two times</i> in ¹ the Swedish legation. He had meantime made a report to Stockholm and informed me that this report had had a great influence on the relations between Sweden and Germany. 1. One reads in the German text: <i>in der schwedischen Gesandtschaft</i> .	(Nothing)	"I saw again Baron von Otter on two occasions at the Swedish legation. Meanwhile, he gave an account to Stockholm personally and he told me that his report had a <i>considerable influence</i> ¹ on Swedish-German relations." 1. On page 9 of the same text T Va reads on: "...despite my pointing out these things in August 1942 at the Swedish embassy in Berlin, people refused to believe these figures."	(Identical to T Va)	(Identical to T Va and T Vb)	(Very close to T III)	<p>Did Gerstein see the Swedish diplomat again <i>once</i> (T I) or <i>twice</i> (T II, T III, T V, and T VI)? In testifying on 29 May 1981 before the Tribunal of Paris, von Otter said that he remembered only <i>one</i> occasion and that his report to Stockholm <i>had not had any influence</i> on Swedish-German relations (C.R. stenogr. 1981, pages 11-12).</p> <p>Another very important question: did von Otter send a written report to Stockholm or did he only make a verbal report? For Pierre Joffroy (<i>op. cit.</i> page 17) and for Saul Friedländer (<i>op. cit.</i>, page 115), the diplomat <i>wrote</i> a report. But nothing has ever been made public. As for Walter Laqueur (<i>Ter. Sec.</i>, pages 48-50), he did not find a report in the archives of Foreign Affairs at Stockholm in February 1980. On 24 March 1983, during a televised program that Alain Decaux broadcast on Gerstein, Baron von Otter, to whom the question was put, replied that on the advice of his Ambassador, he did not make a <i>written</i> report. Shall we one day know the truth on this point?</p> <p>In Saul Friedländer's book (<i>op. cit.</i> page 153) we read some particularly significant phrases of von Otter: "He (Gerstein) sobbed and hid his face in his hands. I thought that he would not support these torments a very long time..." Some months later, the diplomat finds himself facing Gerstein <i>near</i> the Swedish Legation (and not <i>inside</i> the Legation) and he comments: "...he seemed completely desperate and was hardly able to formulate a sentence. He was totally at the end of his nerves..."</p> <p>These impressions of von Otter should be set beside the other impressions reported by Saul Friedländer (<i>op. cit.</i> pages 152-3, 177), giving an account of the "absent-mindedness" (Ausfallserscheinungen), of the "deranged manner," of the "strange reactions of Gerstein in 1942 and 1943."</p>

Table H

T I	T II	T III	T IV	T Va	T Vb	T Vc	T VI	Observations
<p>Gerstein immediately evicted from the Nunciature in Berlin</p> <p>My attempt to refer all that to the head of the legation of the Holy Father did not have a great success. I was asked whether I was a soldier. Then I was refused all discussion. Then, I have made say all that to him by Msgr. Doctor Winter, secretary of the catholic episcopate of Berlin.</p>	<p>[Almost the same as T I except the last sentence.]</p> <p>Then I have made a detailed <i>referat</i> to the secretary of the episcopate of Berlin Msgr. Dr. Winter to refer all that to his bishop of Berlin and likewise to the legation of the Holy Father. [<i>Referat</i> = report, exposé. Here, one can think that a <i>verbal</i> report is meant since Gerstein does not speak of <i>remitting</i> but of <i>referring</i> to the bishop.]</p>	<p>I tried to inform the apostolic nuncio in Berlin as well. They asked me whether I was a soldier. After which talk was refused to have all further conversation with me and I was invited to leave the embassy of His Holiness...</p> <p>I have <i>told</i> that to <i>hundreds</i> of persons, among others to Dr. Winter, secretary of the Catholic bishop of Berlin, begging him to make it known to the Pope.</p> <p>[Here, there is no doubt: Gerstein has recounted verbally.]</p>	<p>(Nothing)</p>	<p>Some days later to relieve my conscience, and in order to have done all that is in my power, I tried to give an account to the papal nuncio in Berlin; from my first words, I am asked whether I am a soldier; thereupon, all conversation with me is refused and I am requested to leave the legation of His Holiness immediately. I tell this only to prove how difficult it was, even for a German, pitiless enemy of Nazism, to find a way to discredit a criminal government.</p> <p>In this situation where every day tens and tens of thousands awaited killing, where a delay of some hours seemed to me criminal, if, in this situation, I say, a qualified representative of Jesus on earth refuses all conversation with me, what can one ask of an average citizen against Nazism? What must he do who hardly knows these <i>errors</i>¹, in general, except from hearsay? He who, like millions of foreigners (such as the Dutch resistance) hold these things to be terribly exaggerated, who does not have my ability, who does not have perhaps any occasion as I do to listen to the foreign radio, what must he do against Nazism? If even the representative of the Pope in Germany refuses to listen to information of this extraordinary importance on this unique violation against the basis of the law of Jesus: "Thou must love thy neighbor as thyself."</p> <p>From that day, risking my life each hour, I have <i>given an account</i> of these atrocious deaths to hundreds of influential persons: to the <i>Niemöller</i> family, to the press attaché of the Swiss legation at Berlin, <i>Dr. Hochstrasser</i>, to the secretary of the Catholic bishop of Berlin, <i>Dr. Winter</i>, requesting a transmittal to the Bishop and to the Pope, to <i>Dr. Dibelius</i> and to many others, as well as <i>thousands</i>² have been informed by me.</p> <p>1. Errors: this word is inappropriate. Should one read "horrors"?</p> <p>2. Thousands: instead of hundreds in T III and T VI.</p>	<p>(Identical to T Va)</p>	<p>(Identical to T Va and T Vb)</p>	<p>I tried in the same affair to make a report to the papal nuncio at Berlin. There, I was asked whether I was a soldier. Upon which, I was refused all further discussion. I was invited to leave the Embassy of His Holiness immediately. I say that here because that shows to what extent it was difficult for a German to find advice in his distress when he could not even find help and advice in such a dreadful necessity from the representative of His Holiness, the Vicar of Christ on earth!... In risking my head daily, at the risk of begin tortured and hanged, I then reported all that to <i>hundreds</i> of influential personalities, among others to the secretary of the Catholic bishop of Berlin, Dr. Winter, in order that he transmit it to H.E. Monseigneur the Bishop and to the Holy See.</p>	<p>In the five texts where Gerstein relates his attempt to enter into contact with the Papal Nuncio in Berlin, one can isolate the following constants:</p> <p>—Gerstein had no conversation with anyone at the nunciature. He was immediately requested to leave the premises;</p> <p>—Gerstein tells of having made a report — and not of having <i>sent</i> a report — to Dr. Winter, and requesting him to inform the Catholic bishop of Berlin and, if possible, the Holy See.</p> <p>Starting from these fragile bases and not confirmed by a Catholic authority of any sort, the Protestant Rolf Hochhuth wrote a play for the theater, <i>The Deputy</i>, which caused a scandal at the beginning of the 60's; it constituted the key document in an undertaking intended to discredit the behavior of Pope Pius XII during the war (<i>Le Vicaire</i>, in particular pages 27, 28, 29, 30 and 31.)</p> <p>Saul Friedländer has given a very personal interpretation to Gerstein's initiative. We read:</p> <p>"In August 1942, Gerstein, who had just witnessed extermination operations by gases, tries to have himself received by the nuncio Orsenigo; he is shown out. It is then that he communicates a report to the juridical counsellor of Msgr. Preysing, archbishop of Berlin, requesting that it be transmitted to the Holy See. There is no reason to believe that the text was not sent to Rome.</p> <p>"The Gerstein report of 1942 [sic] was probably almost identical to that which he wrote on 4 May 1945, since he describes the same event; in fact, in 1942, the Colonel [we know that Gerstein was a lieutenant] could recollect the facts with more precision than three years later. As for the veracity of Gerstein's statements, no historian puts them seriously in doubt [sic].</p> <p>"It is useful to reproduce here a brief extract of the report of 1945 for, taking into account that the Holy See has not to this day denied having received the Gerstein report during the war, one has the right [sic] to assume that a text appreciably identical to that we are about to quote was transmitted to the Sovereign Pontiff by Msgr. Preysing at the end of 1942" (<i>Pie XII et le IIIe Reich</i>, page 123.)</p>
<p>The man pursued</p> <p>On going out of the Legation of the Holy Father at the Rauchstraße in Berlin, I saw myself followed by a policeman who, after some very unpleasant minutes, quit following me.</p>	<p>(Almost the same as T I)</p>	<p>On leaving the Embassy of the Holy See, I was followed by a <i>policeman on a bicycle</i> who approached me, <i>got off his bike</i>, but incomprehensibly let me continue on my way.</p> <p>[Here, the policeman is on a bicycle and gets off it very near Gerstein.]</p>	<p>(Nothing)</p>	<p>Hardly gone out, <i>I am followed by a policeman; some minutes later, a policeman on a bicycle also follows me</i>. I passed minutes of immense despair and disappointment; I lifted the safety catch of my revolver in my pocket and I mentally prepared myself for suicide. The incomprehensible happened: the policeman brushed by me at about 50cms, stopped an instant...and went away."</p> <p>[Here, <i>two</i> policemen, one of whom is on a bicycle but does not dismount.]</p>	<p>(Identical to T Va)</p>	<p>(Identical to T Va and T Vb)</p>	<p>On leaving the Papal embassy, I was followed by a policeman on a <i>bicycle</i>. I had lifted the safety-catch of my revolver in my pocket to blow my brains out when, in an incomprehensible way, this policeman passed very close by me, then turned back.</p>	<p>The comparison of this passage in the different texts shows variations which are difficult to explain.</p> <p>Is Gerstein frightened to the point of seeing sometimes one policeman, sometimes two, sometimes on foot, sometimes on a bicycle? This man now considering suicide because he no longer masters his fear is the same man who tells us of having spread rumors on the homicidal uses of the hydrocyanic acid among the Czech workers at Kollin, the same man again who claims having buried 44 bottles of acid at the Belzec camp under the very eyes of Captain Wirth, with the complicity of the driver, who belonged to the Central Security Service.</p>

Table I

T I	T II	T III	T IV	T Va	T Vb	T Vc	T VI	Observations
<p>Large quantities of hydrocyanic acid stocked at Auschwitz and Oranienburg</p> <p>I must yet add that SS-Sturmbannführer Günther, at the of beginning 1944, asked me for large quantities of prussic acid for an obscure design. The acid was to be supplied to <i>Oranienburg and Auschwitz</i>, concentration camps. I loyally had the acid sent as requested. But immediately after its arrival, I diverted it for disinfection. This was a little dangerous for me, but if I had been asked where the acid was, I would have said: it was already in a state of dangerous decomposition, and because of that I had to use it up for disinfection.</p>	<p>"I must still add that the SS-Sturmbannführer Guenther of the RSHA at the beginning 1944 asked me for very big supplies of prussic acid for an obscure purpose. The acid had to be supplied at <i>Berlin, Kurfuerstenstrasse</i> at his place of work. I succeeded in making him believe that that was not possible due to the great dangers. It was a matter of several freight cars of toxic acid, enough to kill a lot of men, millions! He had said to me that he was not sure, if, when, for what group of persons, in what manner, where one would have need of this poison. I do not know exactly what the intention of RSHA and of the SD may have been. But I thought later of the words of Goebbels "to close the doors after them, if Nazism should never succeed." Perhaps they wanted to kill a great part of the German people, perhaps the foreign workers, perhaps the prisoners of war — I do not know! In any case, I diverted the acid immediately after its arrival for disinfection duties."</p>	<p>I must still add that SS-Sturmbannführer Günther of the Principal Office of Security of the Reich — I believe he is the son of the racist Günther — demanded again from me at the beginning of 1944 very large quantities of prussic acid for a very obscure purpose. He showed me in the <i>Kurfürstenstraße, in Berlin</i>, a shed in which he was thinking of stocking the prussic acid. I then declared to him that it was excluded that I should take the responsibility. It related to several wagons, enough to put to death millions of human beings. He says to me that he did not know yet whether the poison would be used, nor when, for whom, by what method, etc. But it had to be held available at all times. Afterwards I have not been able to stop myself from thinking often of Goebbel's words. I suppose that they wanted to kill a large part of the German people, including surely the clergy and the badly-regarded officers. This would have to have been done in places such as lecture halls or clubs, this at least is what I could deduce from the questions relating to execution techniques that Günther asked me. It is possible also that he had had to kill foreign workers or prisoners of war — I do not know. In any case I made arrangements so that the prussic acid would disappear for no matter what disinfection purposes as soon as it had arrived <i>in the camps of Oranienburg and Auschwitz</i>. This was dangerous for me, but I would simply have been able to say that the poison was already in a dangerous state of decomposition.</p>	(Nothing)	<p>I must add that Guenther of the R.S.H.A. (I believe that he is the son of Guenther of the racial studies) asked me again, at the beginning of 1944, for large quantities of prussic acid. The poison was to be delivered to his office <i>in the Kurfuerstenstrasse</i> in Berlin and stored in a shed that he showed me. It concerned very large quantities, altogether several freight cars, which were to be piled up little by little and held at his disposal. This was sufficient poison to kill several millions who in this way would have disappeared without a lot of noise. Guenther told me that he did not know yet where, when, how, for what purpose, for what group this poison was to be used. In any case, it was to be constantly available. I deduced from several technical questions put by Guenther that a part, at least, of this poison was to be used to put down a large number of men in the clubs and the lecture halls. According to these meagre indications, I supposed that it related to officers or priests, in any case educated people and <i>the poison was to be employed in Berlin itself</i>.</p> <p>Having looked over the premises in detail, I state to Guenther that I cannot take the responsibility to stock such quantities of poison at that spot, in the capital, since there was enough to kill twice the number of all the inhabitants. With many difficulties, I obtain the storage of this poison <i>at Oranienburg and at Auschwitz</i>, in the concentration camps. Afterwards, I arrange things so as to use up the poison as soon as it arrives, supposedly for disinfection.</p>	(Identical to T Va)	(Identical to T Va and T Vb)	(Almost the same as T Va)	<p>In this long passage, Gerstein gives free rein to his imagination. These are only hazardous suppositions and deductions. We shall keep in mind that Zyklon B, a traditional disinfectant used by the German army since 1917, has been forwarded to the concentration camps of Oranienburg and Auschwitz, to be stored there.</p> <p>On 5 May 1945, at Rottweil, Gerstein met two Allied investigators; among other documents, he gave them a sheaf of invoices of the Degesch company, made out in his name, for a total of 2,370 kgs of Zyklon B (Hydrocyanic acid) to be forwarded one half to Auschwitz and the other half to Oranienburg.</p> <p>Gerstein declared to Commandant Mattéi, Examining Magistrate of the 2nd Military Tribunal of Paris, on 19 July 1945, that he had been twice on a mission to Oranienburg (<i>Le Monde Juif/The Jewish World</i>, January–March 1980, page 28); on the other hand, he does not name Auschwitz among the number of camps visited by him. How would Gerstein have been able to supervise the utilisation of the bottles of Zyklon B on arrival at a camp he never went to? In addition, Oranienburg is located in the region of Berlin, that is to say within the 1937 frontiers of the Reich, where we have known officially since 19 August 1960 (Keine Vergasung in Dachau/No Gassing in Dachau by Dr. Martin Broszat, <i>Die Zeit</i> (newspaper), 19 August 1960, page 16) that no camp included a poison gas chamber. The delivery of Zyklon B to Oranienburg thus presented nothing of a disturbing character. Why has an absolutely identical delivery to the camp at Auschwitz aroused, by contrast, such grave disquiet?</p> <p>Since Gerstein himself stated that he had never been to the camp at Auschwitz, and, moreover, no evidence of his going there has ever been discovered, we read with astonishment what Pierre Joffroy writes (<i>L'Espion de Dieu/God's Spy</i>) in regard to Gerstein and Auschwitz. We quote two extracts:</p> <p>The first is on page 199: "Gerstein goes and comes between Berlin and Auschwitz. A specialist, he is present at the visits by the high Nazi officials to this metropolis of what has no name — of what will have no name except from a distance in time: genocide."</p> <p>The second, on page 206: "At Auschwitz, the tall tormented figure of Gerstein gives rise among the SS to clouds of perplexity." On page 207, Joffroy reports comments which were presumably made to him in 1968, according to which certain SS doctors thought that Gerstein had introduced himself into the camp at Auschwitz in order to blow it up (sic).</p>
<p>The services offered by Gerstein to the French Army of Occupation</p> <p>The 22 April 1945, I had awaited the taking of the town of Metzingen/Württemberg. <i>I had given the advice</i> to the citizens and at the Town Hall of Metzingen to <i>give up</i> the town to the French. ... I passed the French lines and I presented myself, of my own accord, voluntarily, to Monsieur le French Commandant of the town of Reutlingen. ... Having checked the papers, M. le Commandant of Reutlingen gave me a paper with the following text: "The bearer is not a real SS and must not be treated as such, but, on the contrary, with every consideration." It was M. le Commandant of Reutlingen who proposed, <i>according to my wishes</i>, that I should be presented to a place of service which would be interested in my knowledge of Nazism and which, perhaps, would make use of my anti-Nazism.</p>	(Nothing)	(Nothing)	(Nothing)	(Nothing)	(Nothing)	(Nothing)	(Nothing)	<p>This passage is taken from a page which indisputably belongs to T I, although it is filed separately in the Archives of the Evangelical Church of Bielefeld/Westphalia. It will be noticed that there is nothing equivalent in the five other texts. Here, Gerstein appears in the very ordinary role of a deserter offering his services to the enemies of the day before.</p> <p>A draft also filed at Bielefeld shows a fairly comparable text. In this draft, Gerstein presents himself as "responsible head of the Christian youth" ... "launched as an agent of the resistant church, as personal friend of the Rev. Niemöller, in the SS Army." Gerstein says he is a personal friend of Pastor Niemöller? This is at least a subject worth considering. In a letter of 24 May 1946, Pastor Niemöller writes to Frau Gerstein: "Personally, I can on this occasion do but very little, because I <i>have no recollection of your husband's activities since 1937</i>." To be sure, Pastor Niemöller has passed several years in a concentration camp, but the restraint he expresses is certainly not that of a "<i>personal friend</i>" of Gerstein's. This letter from Pastor Niemöller to Frau Gerstein is preserved in the Archives of the Evangelical Church of Bielefeld.</p>

Table J

T I	T II	T III	T IV	T Va	T Vb	T Vc	T VI	Observations
<p>Gassing in the open air in the moats of Maria-Theresienstadt</p> <p>(Nothing)</p>	<p>One other time, Guenther consulted me as to whether it was possible to kill large numbers of Jews in the open air in the fortification of Maria-Theresienstadt. To prevent this diabolical idea, I declared this method impossible. Some time later I heard that the SD supplied itself some other way with prussic acid to kill those poor men at Theresienstadt.</p>	<p>(Almost the same as T II)</p> <p>—It should be noted that Hans Rothfels has forborne copying this passage of T III in the review <i>Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte</i> No. 2, April 1953. He points out this cut in a note No. 52n on page 193.</p>	<p>(Nothing)</p>	<p>Some time after, <i>Guenther</i> recalled me to the R.S.H.A. and asked me if it might be possible to poison the Jews interned at Maria-Theresienstadt <i>by throwing prussic acid from the top of the fortifications</i>. To prevent the execution of this plan, I declared this impracticable.</p> <p>I have learned later that he had obtained the prussic acid some other way and that he had all the same executed the Jews who, supposedly, led such a good life at Maria-Theresienstadt; it involved Jews, fathers of sons killed or holders of high decorations and having rendered special service.</p>	<p>(Identical to T Va)</p>	<p>(Identical to T Va and T Vb)</p>	<p>One other time Günther asked me if it was possible at Maria-Theresienstadt, in the moats of the fortress where the Jews who were interned there had the right to walk, to poison them <i>by throwing cans of cyanide from the top</i>. To make this terrible plan ineffectual, I stated that it was impossible. I have learned later that the SD had however obtained the hydrocyanide acid by another way and that it had killed all the same the Jews who were, it seems, so comfortable at Theresienstadt. They were the fathers of sons fallen in battle, Jews of great merit, holders of high decorations.</p>	<p>Gassing in the open air, by throwing prussic acid from the top of the fortifications! One understands that the chemical engineer Gerstein would have declared this impracticable, because hydrocyanic acid is highly volatile. However, it took place, he says. This passage of confessions is so improbable that one can understand the decision of Dr. Hans Rothfels not to publish it, imitated in this by Léon Poliakov and Josef Wulf (<i>Dritt. R.u.J.</i>, page 110 and <i>III R. et J.</i>, page 118) and by Helmut Krausnick (<i>Dok. z. M.V.</i>, page 15), only the last indicating the cut by a dotted line.</p>
<p>A pad soaked in prussic acid held under the nose of children</p> <p>(Nothing)</p>	<p>The method of killing children was to hold a pad of prussic acid under the nose.</p>	<p>At Auschwitz, it was customary to kill children by holding pads soaked in prussic acid under the nose.</p>	<p>(Nothing)</p>	<p>At Auschwitz alone, <i>millions</i> of children were killed by a pad of prussic acid held under the nose.</p>	<p>...at <i>Auschwitz</i> alone, <i>millions</i> of children were killed by a pad of prussic acid held under the nose, in the <i>Ravensbruck</i> concentration camp. [A typing error in the arrangement of the words make the phrase incomprehensible.]</p>	<p>(Identical to T Va)</p>	<p>At Auschwitz alone, <i>million</i>s of children were killed by holding a pad of hydrocyanic acid under the nose.</p>	<p>T V and T VI mention the execution of millions of children. T III gives the same method of execution, but deletes the improbable "millions" of victims. Dr. Hans Rothfels has not reproduced this sentence (<i>V.j.H.</i> page 193); for him, it is something which Gerstein repeats from hearsay (<i>Hörensagen</i>). Léon Poliakov and Josef Wulf, and Helmut Krausnick have imitated him this time also.</p>
<p>I have myself seen experiments performed at Ravensbrück, says Gerstein</p> <p>(Nothing)</p>	<p><i>I — myself — saw</i> experiments continued right up till death with living persons in the concentration camps. In this way, the SS-Hauptsturmführer Gundlach, Dr.med., made such experiments in the concentration camps for women at Ravensbrück near Fuerstenberg—Mecklenburg.</p>	<p>Of the remainder, I have <i>myself</i> seen at the camp of Ravensbrück, near Fuerstenberg in the Mecklenburg, the concentration camp for women, experiments made on the living. These were made on the initiative of SS-Gruppenführer Dr. Gebhardt-Hohenlychen, by the SS-Hauptsturmführer Dr. Gundlach.</p>	<p>(Nothing)</p>	<p>In the Ravensbrück concentration camp, <i>I was present</i> at these tests on living beings, performed by Dr. Gundlach, Hauptsturmführer, on the order of SS Gruppenführer Professor Dr. Gerhardt, Hohenlychen.</p>	<p><i>I have been present</i> at these tests on living humans performed by Dr. Gundlach, Hauptsturmführer, on the order of SS Gruppenführer, Professor Dr. Gebhardt Hohenlychen.</p>	<p>(Identical to T Va)</p>	<p>At the concentration camp for women of Ravensbrück near Fürstenberg in Mecklenburg, <i>I saw</i> tests on living women performed by the Hauptsturmführer Dr.med. Grundlach on the order of SS Gruppenführer Professor Dr. Gebhardt-Hohenlychen.</p>	<p>Dr. Hans Rothfels also considered as "Hörensagen" this affirmation of Gerstein. Nevertheless, one reads in T II, T III, T V and T VI: "I have myself seen...I have been present," <i>etc.</i> Dr. Hans Rothfels therefore seems not to have believed completely in the "confessions" of Gerstein. How else explain the cuts he has made in the texts?</p>
<p>How many homosexuals have disappeared in the ovens at Oranienburg and in how many days?</p> <p>(Nothing)</p>	<p>One day, at Oranienburg concentration (camps), <i>I saw</i> all the prisoners who were there for being perverts (homosexuals) done away with <i>in a single day</i>.</p>	<p><i>I was astounded</i>, at Oranienburg, to see all the homosexuals — <i>several hundreds</i> — disappear <i>in a few days</i>, and, actually, in the ovens.</p>	<p>(Nothing)</p>	<p>Another day, at Oranienburg, <i>I saw thousands</i> of pederasts disappear without a trace into a furnace.</p>	<p>(Identical to T Va)</p>	<p>(Identical to T Va and T Vb)</p>	<p>In addition, <i>one day</i> at Oranienburg <i>I saw several hundreds</i> and even <i>several thousands</i> of homosexuals disappear without a trace in the ovens.</p>	<p>Hundreds? Thousands? Disappeared in one day? In some days? For Dr. Hans Rothfels, in spite of the "I have seen" of Gerstein, this is again "Hörensagen."</p>

Table K

T I	T II	T III	T IV	T Va	T Vb	T Vc	T VI	Observations
<p>[The extracts of the “confessions” in this Table K come from the supplements (Ergänzungen). — T I and T II have no supplements.]</p> <p>Eye-witness evidence?</p> <p>(Nothing)</p>	<p>(Nothing)</p>	<p>[In T III the supplements are separately typewritten: they are eight in number.]</p> <p>At Belzec, <i>I had the impression</i> that all were really dead... <i>The day of my inspection</i> at Belzec, it happened that a Jewess made some cuts in the neck to some Jews of the working-party with the aid of a razor that she had kept hidden on her. <i>I think of</i> some impressions profoundly moving for me...</p>	<p>[In T IV, the supplements represent nine hand-written half-pages]</p> <p>At Belzec, <i>I had the impression</i> that all were dead. On the occasion of <i>my visit to Belzec</i>, a Jewess had wounded with a razor some men of the working-party. <i>...I remember</i> some gripping impressions.</p>	<p>[In T V and T VI, the content of the supplements with the variations is integrated into the text itself of the confession.]</p> <p>At Belzec, <i>I had the impression</i> the day of my inspection, that after such a long wait in the chambers, everybody was truly dead... At the time of <i>my visit to Belzec</i>, a Jewess had cut several of the Jewish workers, with the help of a hidden razor. ...Some particularly gripping impressions <i>do not leave me any more</i>.</p>	<p>(Identical to T Va)</p>	<p>(Identical to T Va and T Vb)</p>	<p>(Almost the same as T V)</p> <p>...Some touching scenes still pass before my eyes.</p>	<p>We have chosen these extracts because Gerstein pretends, obviously, to make his statements as an eyewitness.</p> <p>But Dr. Hans Rothfel has <i>forborne</i> taking the responsibility of publishing the supplements to the German version of 4 May 1945 (which we designate T III) on the pretext that <i>they are certainly not based on eyewitness evidence</i> (VfZ. 1953, page 179, note 5).</p> <p>To our knowledge, these supplements have never been published previously either in France or elsewhere.</p>
<p>How many Polish priests were shot?</p> <p>(Nothing)</p>	<p>(Nothing)</p>	<p>It concerned <i>thousands</i> of Polish ecclesiastics who had to dig the ditches themselves...</p>	<p>It concerned <i>several thousands</i> of Polish curés and priests, forced to dig the ditches themselves...</p>	<p>“...about 8,000 Polish clerics have been obliged to dig ditches...”</p>	<p>About 2,000 Polish clerics...</p>	<p>(Identical to T Vb)</p>	<p>It concerned several thousands — 8,000 I believe — priests and members of the Polish clergy.</p>	<p>8,000? 2,000? several thousand? In his handwritten text (T IV), Gerstein writes “several thousand.”</p>
<p>How many dying were killed off?</p> <p>(Nothing)</p>	<p>(Nothing)</p>	<p>While they were taking measurements for a conversion of the premises, <i>two men</i> had suddenly moved. The SS Rottenführer who was accompanying them had then asked: Where then? Then he had taken an iron bar which he found to hand and he had smashed the skulls of the <i>two men</i>.</p>	<p>While busy with their work, all of a sudden they saw <i>some</i> who were moving. The SS Rottenführer of the service only asked: ‘Where?’ then he took an iron bar that was already at hand to break their skulls.</p>	<p>Thousands of cadavers in general typhus have been stacked there; suddenly, they have seen that <i>some</i> were still moving; the Rottenfuehrer, who carried the key, merely asked: ‘Where is that?’ then took a round iron hammer just nearby and has smashed in the skulls of the persons pointed out.</p>	<p>(Identical to T Va)</p>	<p>(Identical to T Va and T Vb)</p>	<p>(Almost the same as T V)</p>	<p>Some? a certain number? two men? Gerstein seems not to have remembered precisely what was reported to him and he varies from one version to another.</p>
<p>Was the little boy “thrown” or “gently urged” into the gas chamber?</p> <p>(Nothing)</p>	<p>(Nothing)</p>	<p>I recall that a little boy of perhaps three years bent down to pick it up, what pleasure it gave him, and that he was afterwards <i>pushed</i>, no, in that case he is <i>gently urged</i> to make him go into the gaschamber.</p>	<p>Or I remember a naked little girl of 5 years who, one meter from the death chamber, loses a little string of corals, of the little boy who picks it up, who is very happy with it — and then, <i>was thrown</i> into the chamber.</p>	<p>[The little boy] picks up [the coral necklace], looks at it lovingly, happy with it and, the following moment is <i>pushed</i>, <i>I must say with gentleness</i>, by a guard preserving a remnant of feeling, to the interior of the chamber.</p>	<p>(Identical to T Va)</p>	<p>(Identical to T Va and T Vb)</p>	<p>(Almost the same as T V)</p>	<p>It is in the handwritten text (T IV) that Gerstein writes that the little boy was “thrown into the chamber.” The other texts have maintained the anecdote, but in humanizing it a little, if such an expression is permissible in such a context.</p>
<p>Two methods of killing — steam boilers — chimneys of blast furnaces</p> <p>(Nothing)</p>	<p>(Nothing)</p>	<p>But more than just a test was made. For example, undoubtedly on a fairly large number of people, death by compressed air in the old boilers into which the air was introduced from compressors of the type ordinarily used to break up asphalt. A kind of death...consisted of making people climb the stairway which led to a blast-furnace, to finish them off once at the top, and to make them disappear afterwards in the blast-furnace.</p>	<p>For example, men were killed by means of compressed air in boilers, making use of the ordinary compressors for road asphalt. One way to kill men was to make them ascend the stairway of a blast furnace, to kill them there with a <i>rifle</i> shot and to have them disappear into the furnace.</p>	<p>Tests were also made with the aid of compressed air; people were put into old boilers filled, by means of a compressor, with compressed air. ...Another way of killing people in <i>Poland</i> was to make them climb to the top of ladders of blast-furnaces and throw them inside after having killed them with a <i>pistol</i> shot.</p>	<p>(Identical to T Va)</p>	<p>(Identical to T Va and T Vb)</p>	<p>(Almost the same as T V)</p>	<p>We have closed this comparative table with the above two scenes, worthy of Grand Guignol [horrific melodrama]. Did Gerstein the engineer really believe in the “Hörensagen” (hearsay), to use once more the expression of Dr. Hans Rothfels? Executions by firing squad, machine-gunning, hanging, etc., were sufficiently tragic for it to be pointless to imagine methods of execution as complicated as they are improbable.</p>

Annex to Table I

MARTIN NIEMÖLLER D. D. ,J J)
PFARRER

BÜDINGEN / HESSEN
SCHLOSS

24. Mai 1946
N./K.

Frau
Elfriede Gerstein
(14b) Tübingen
Tropengenesungsheim

Sehr verehrte, liebe Frau Gerstein !

In Tübingen erhielt ich Ihren Brief vom 17.5. und hatte auch zweimal eine kurze Besprechung mit ~~mit~~ Ernst Küpper wegen der Angelegenheit Ihres Mannes. Leider war es völlig unmöglich für mich vorbeizukommen, weil ich schon mit meinem Vortrag und dann spät in die Nacht mit Besprechungen besetzt war und am nächsten Morgen in aller Frühe weiterreisen musste, um mittags zur rechten Zeit zu einer Pfarrkonferenz in der Nähe von Darmstadt zu sein. Leider bin ich nun durch das Gespräch mit Herrn Küpper auch nicht recht weiter gekommen. Mir scheint das Entscheidende, dass man zunächst einmal festzustellen sucht, wo überhaupt Ihr Mann sich jetzt befindet, damit dann solche Menschen, die Kurt persönlich nahe gekannt haben und ein vollgültiges Zeugnis für ihn ausstellen können, wie vielleicht Pastor Rehling in Hagen und Dr. Ehlers in Oldenburg, versuchen, der Entwicklung einen Stoss vorwärts zu geben und sich für seine Freilassung bzw. für seine Rehabilitierung einzusetzen. Persönlich kann ich ja in dieser Angelegenheit deshalb so wenig machen, weil mir selbst jeder Eindruck über die Entwicklung Ihres Mannes seit 1937 fehlt, den ich als meine persönliche Überzeugung mit Aussicht auf Erfolg geltend machen könnte. Wohl aber kann ich, wie ich das ja im Fall von Pfarrer Rehling wohl schon getan habe, bezeugen, dass die Referenzen von Freunden und nahen Bekannten Ihres Mannes als zuverlässig gelten können, weil ich für diese Personen (wie Pfarrer Rehling und Dr. Ehlers) in vollem Umfange bürgen kann. Dazu bin ich in jedem Fall gern bereit.

Dies wollte ich Sie wenigstens gleich wissen lassen, und das umsomehr, als ich Sie nun persönlich ja nicht habe sehen und sprechen können.

Mit herzlichen Grüssen und in der Hoffnung, dass die Zeit im Tropengenesungsheim Ihnen gut tun möchte, bin ich
Ihr sehr ergebener

Martin Niemöller

Translation of four lines marked by XX:

Personally, I can do little in this affair, for I have no insight at all into your husband's development since 1937 which I could offer as my personal conviction with any chance of success.

Certain answers made by Gerstein in the course of his interrogations at Paris, which sometimes clarify and sometimes contradict the statements made in his “confessions.”

We have not picked out systematically *all* the differences, because it seemed indispensable to us to have regard to the following factors:

1 These texts have no quality of style; they are written in an often unskilled French which Gerstein has been able to try and improve from one text to another.

2 Two texts (T III and T VI) are translated from the German; the *notable* differences between one or the other of these two texts and the other versions have naturally been pointed out; on the other hand, every *minimal* difference, often due to the interpretation of the translator, has been ignored.

3 One of the texts (T V) was originally composed in French, but not by Gerstein; this is the copy of an interrogation conducted by the officers of the O.R.C.G.

Additionally, it is easy enough to identify, if one so wishes, *all* the differences by reading the corresponding passages in the six “confessions,” in the presentation of the texts which we have already made.

Footnotes to Chapter I

1. Obviously, the original documents of the thesis were in French.
2. In the “confessions” of 26 April 1945 (T I and T II) Gerstein make a mistake as to the date of his marriage. Instead of 2 November 1937 (date of the religious ceremony) the text reads 2 May 1937.
3. Known also as Sachsenhausen.
4. Collection of clothes and textiles for the war effort.
5. Not the light carriage-whip seen today. This horsewhip, in common use where motorized transport was not possible, was made with a heavy wooden butt about 18 inches long — the size of a policeman’s truncheon/night stick — and, with thongs, could easily reach 15 feet. It was used to control teams of 6 horses or oxen.
6. “The Department Store of the West.”
7. “*Kaiserliche und Königliche*” = Imperial and Royal.
8. Throughout the Second World War, Pastor Martin Niemöller was regularly cited by the Allies’ press, radio, etc., as the outstanding hero of German resistance to the Nazis. If Gerstein listened to the BBC and the Voice of America, he would have known this.

During the First World War, Niemöller had been a submarine commander; after the war, he became a Pastor and, from 1924, an active Nazi supporter. In 1934 he published a biography *Vom U-Boot zur Kanzel* (from U-Boat to Altar) which was highly praised in the Nazi press and very widely read in Germany. He became the head of Germany’s twenty-eight Protestant sects, the *Bekenntniskirche* (the “Confessional Church” mentioned by Gerstein in the “confessions”) and on that occasion, 25 January 1934, he wrote to Chancellor Hitler: “We have no need to assure you how grateful we are to you for having uprooted the German people from internal and external disintegration and for having freed its spirit for a new flowering.”

His opposition to the policies of the Third Reich showed itself only in June 1937: Niemöller complained of the Nazi regime’s interference in ecclesiastical affairs.

Arrested 1 July 1937, he was sent to the concentration camp of Dachau (near Munich, in Bavaria) as the “personal prisoner of the Führer.” He was released when the American army overran Dachau in the spring of 1945.

At the start of the Second World War, in September 1939, he had asked the government to be allowed to serve as a volunteer in the German army but his request was refused. This fortunate occurrence stood him in good stead after the German capitulation in May 1945.

In postwar Germany he became noted for his intransigence in demanding the purge of all those who had served the Nazi regime. In the early '60's he was one of the most ardent inspirers of the Protestant writer Rolf Hochhut, whose play *The Deputy* caused deep offense for its unjustified accusation of Pope Pius XII.

9. Date of the attempt on Hitler's life by an army conspiracy.
10. A very large castle/fortifications complex near Prague, named for the Empress Maria-Theresa (1717-1780).
11. Better-known today under its Russian name of Lvov.
12. Translation of the word “*richtig*.” Probable meaning: things are in order, as planned.
13. Gerstein presumably meant Hans F. K. Günther whose principle work *Rassenkunde des deutschen Volkes*, on the ethnic origins of the German peoples, was published in 1929.
14. Military rank, in disuse since the first World War, equivalent to senior non-commissioned officer.
15. E.M. — *Etat-major*: headquarters staff.
16. O.K.W. — *Oberkommando der Wehrmacht* — German High Command.
17. An old German saying, from a folk tale: “The goat who became the gardener and ate the garden.”
18. Julius Schreck formed the *Schutzstaffel*, as Hitler's bodyguard, in April 1925.
19. The letters “a.D.” after the title of Bergassessor mean *ausser Dienst* which translated mean: “out of service; not working.” The letters were commonly used by retired professional people, such as doctors, to indicate that they were no longer practicing.
Gerstein had been finally dismissed from government service in February 1937; thus, presumably, his rationale for using these letters. However, it seems an odd quirk of character:
— to invite attention to the fact that he had been expelled from the mining service, or,
— to give the impression that he was elderly and retired.
20. The Werewolf movement (German *Werwolf*), much publicized at the time, was supposed to have been a “last-stand” German underground resistance movement; although, as events later showed, it seems to have existed in little more than name.
Is it probable that a French army officer who, by the hazards of war, finds himself the Military governor of a small German town, would discuss sensitive intelligence matters with an SS prisoner?
It appears significant that Gerstein did not repeat these alleged remarks of the French officer in the final version of T I and that they are not repeated elsewhere. In its final form T I was of course intended for perusal by senior French authorities who would have been startled, not to say indignantly surprised, at the future espionage career being planned for Gerstein by a junior combat officer of the French army.
21. Obviously an error: in German, “Wo” = “Where.” To read, where . . .”
22. Without tear-making effects. The invoice of 31 May 1944 is the same except that the dispatch was made on 26 May to Oranienburg.
23. Quarantine/isolation hospital.
24. S.I.R.—*Sur interrogation rogatoire*, i.e. in reply to a supplementary question.
25. An error: the date was 6 August 1945.

Chapter II

Authenticity of the Texts

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General Remarks

In this chapter, we shall of course examine only the essential authenticity of the texts; the veracity of the narratives will be studied in the following chapter. It is to be noted that some remarks have already been made on the veracity in the "Observations" column of the comparative tables.

Regarding the essential authenticity of the six versions known to us, we shall present on the one hand the certainties and, on the other hand, hypotheses based on strong presumptions.

Our studies lead us to classify these six texts into three distinct categories:

1. Texts of which the origin is certain and of which Gerstein is indisputably the author; these are T I, T II, and T IV.

2. One text of which the origin is certain and of which the composition is not due to Gerstein but to the O.R.C.G.; this is the text T V, in its three versions T Va, T Vb, and T Vc.

3. The typewritten texts in German of which the origins are suspect and of which no evidence permits us to state that Gerstein might be wholly or partially the author; these are T III and T VI. Although T III has the date 4 May 1945 and T VI 6 May 1945, we shall deal with T III last for reasons which we shall show later.

Texts of Which Gerstein Is Indisputably the Author

Text T I

This is the first “confession” composed by Gerstein, 26 April 1945, some days after he had surrendered to the troops of the French 1st Army. It is handwritten in French. Examination of the handwriting and comparison with letters previously written by Gerstein prove that the former Obersturmführer is indeed the author.

Gerstein dated it from Rottweil, where he enjoyed the privileged status of a prisoner on parole and where he occupied a room in the hotel Mohren. He used paper, rare at the time but which he had available: headed notepaper, plain white paper of the same format, white squared paper of a smaller size, and even one sheet which he had begun to use almost five years previously, since we read at the top his name, his titles, his address in Hagen, and the date of 14.8.1940.

We have every reason to believe that the SS officer composed his “confession” spontaneously. One will immediately notice the irresistible need of the former activist of the Confessional Church to make “confessions” repetitively, seeing that the last two small sheets of T I repeat whole passages of the preceding pages.

Text T II

This French text is dated “Rottweil 26 April 1945,” as is T I, but is typewritten. It is the only one of the six texts carrying Gerstein’s handwritten signature, which is found at the bottom of the sixth page. Of the six pages of the “confession” properly so-called, the first five are very similar to the first eight pages of T I; but nevertheless there are differences, one of which is very important, as it concerns the number of victims at the camps of Belzec and Treblinka. There is no estimate in T I, but in T II Gerstein puts forward the figure of 25 million (*sic*).

The sixth page of T II has no equivalent in T I: here Gerstein tells of the exterminations, the atrocities, and the experiments on living human beings which had taken place in camps other than Belzec and

Treblinka, even in camps which the former Obersturmführer never visited, such as Auschwitz and Mauthausen.

Similarly, the tenth page of T I (which he mistakenly numbered 9) has no equivalent in T II. Here Gerstein gives details of his surrender to the French troops, of the reception he received from the military authorities, and of his offers to put himself at their service.

A hypothesis can be formulated: Gerstein has partly used T I as a draft to type T II but, since he was a prisoner, "suggestions" could have been made to him for the sixth and last page; for example, he could have been asked to recount atrocities of which he might have heard in order to fill out his narrative, which concerned only Belzec and Treblinka. By the same token, he could have been helped with his hesitant French to compose the wording in which he testifies under oath to the truthfulness of his statements.

The seventh page, unsigned, titled "Kurt Gerstein — supplement" does not call for particular remark; the former SS officer here explains that a circle of anti-Nazi friends, of whom he gives the names and addresses, used to meet at his Berlin apartment; he adds the details of some other persons domiciled elsewhere than at Berlin.

T II is the best-known of Gerstein's "confessions," especially in France. Paradoxically, it is in the files of the American Justice Department at the Nuremberg Tribunal that it was found in January 1946. The explanation for this is simple: on 5 May 1945, Gerstein still had with him the seven typewritten pages, which seems to indicate that the French officers of Military Security did not attach exceptional importance to them; on that day, the prisoner on parole from Rottweil met two Allied investigators, the British Major Evans, and the American named Haught, in the Mohren Hotel lobby. For the first time, he saw Anglo-Saxon¹ officers in occupied Würtemberg and he engaged in conversation with them. The Allied officers made a report of this encounter. Gerstein gave them the seven pages of his typewritten "confession" of 26 April 1945 together with certain documents as attachments, in particular a handwritten note of two pages in English and a sheaf of twelve invoices of the DEGESCH company relating to deliveries of Zyklon B.

All of these papers were examined in Paris by the Documentation Division, the head of which was Major Robert Storey; this Division decided to admit these documents in the file series PS (Paris-Storey) under the number 1553.

On 30 January 1946, the French Prosecutor-General, Charles Dubost, insisted in vain that the file PS-1553 should be retained by the Nuremberg Tribunal; the refusal of his request is important, but it does not put the material authenticity of the documents in question.

We shall finish with a study of one last point. What machine did

Gerstein use in typing T II? We are reasonably sure that it was typed on a machine with a French keyboard. Actually, the é and the è are obviously typed with a single key, which is not possible on a German keyboard. One also notices many circumflex accents, which exist only on a French keyboard.

One therefore has good reason to think that French Military Security put a typewriter at the disposal of its prisoner.

The appearance of the typing itself could be that of an occasional typist, as Gerstein must have been.

Text T IV

This is the second handwritten “confession” of Gerstein composed, like the first, in French at the Mohren Hotel in Rottweil; it carries the date 6 May 1945.

We have mentioned in the chapter “Establishment of the Texts” that it consists of nine half-pages for the principal “confession” and of nine other half-pages for the supplements.

a. The principal “confession”

It is very short and gives the reader of T I and T II the impression of being unfinished. It stops short at the moment when the SS General Globocnik gives instructions to the Untersturmführer for the disinfection of large quantities of textiles at the Belzec camp. But there is no mention made of any gassings of the detainees in this “confession.” This fact is surprising.

Moreover, it does not seem that there are any pages missing, for the last half-page, numbered 9, is not even entirely filled.

This brief “confession” repeats the corresponding passages of T I and T II. One notices, however, a very important difference from these two texts: Gerstein says that on 8 June 1942 he was given the order to deliver *two* kgs of hydrocyanic acid instead of the *100* kgs in the texts of 26 April 1945 (T I and T II). Over and above this difference, there are additions; these are his personal comments which we shall find again from time to time, with other elaborations, in T III, T IV and T VI.

b. The supplements

They are not dated, but LKA as well as Gerstein’s widow believe that they complete T IV. They do not have an equivalent in T I and T II; on the other hand, they are found with variants in T III, T V, and T VI. However, in T V and T VI they are not separated as in T III and T IV but integrated into the actual text of the last part of the “confessions.”

The authenticity of T IV is indisputable, but one can ask oneself what was Gerstein’s motive in composing it. We offer three

hypotheses:

1st hypothesis

The repeated composition of “confessions,” which are the same in essentials although with differences, arose from a trait in Gerstein’s character; once a clean sheet of paper was at his disposal, he could not resist his need to write, beginning with his biography and continuing with an account of his experiences in the SS.

2nd hypothesis

Gerstein wanted to send a report to his wife: he writes to her moreover in his last letter dated 26 May 1945: “*Geh mit dem Bericht, den ich anlege, zum Militärgouverneur*,” which means: “Go with the attached report to the Military Governor.”

It is this which would explain the new composition in French of a document which should, or so at least her husband hoped, have helped Elfriede to benefit from favorable treatment from the French military authorities.

Why is this account so short? Did Gerstein have qualms about showing his wife, whose patriotism he knew, the essentials of the “confession,” that it to say the revelation of a gassing of deportees in the camps at Belzec and Treblinka? Was he frightened of her skepticism, indeed, her incredulous indignation?

3rd hypothesis

The officers of French Military Security were disagreeably surprised to learn that on the previous day, 5 May, their prisoner had given to Allied investigators documents in the French language which were intended for the French authorities. Gerstein could have wished to make amends by composing a new “confession.”

When the French officers noticed that the former SS man was repeating the same things once more, perhaps they gave him an order to make fresh revelations.

This last hypothesis could explain the abrupt interruption of the principal “confession” and the composing of fresh supplements.

It is additionally possible that our three hypotheses each contain a part of the truth and that they are interconnected.

To our knowledge, *no one before us has published nor even made known the existence of T IV (principal “confession” and supplements).*

2. Text T V of which the Composition is Due to the O.R.C.G.

The origin of this text is certain, as we have stated in Chapter One.

There is at the Direction of Military Justice a letter from the head of the O.R.C.G., dated 6 June 1945, of which we quote below the first lines:

“Head of the O.R.C.G.

“to

“*Monsieur* the Professor Gros

“Carlton Gardens 4

“London.

“I have the honor to send you herewith the copy of the interrogation by my office of the person concerned: GERSTEIN OF TUBINGEN.

“This document will not fail, I believe, to interest you.”

The document mentioned in this letter constitutes the text T Va.

Saul Friedländer reproduces a part of the letter of 6 June 1945 (K.G., page 185), but he adds: “The text of the interrogation has not been found until now.” The text has now been retrieved (it was returned to the Archives of the Direction of Military Justice on 3 August 1971), and it can be consulted there.

Principal characteristics of T Va

— T Va is presented as the copy of an interrogation. We do not know where the original of this interrogation is to be found.

— The title “Report of Dr. Gerstein of Tübingen” already contains an error: Gerstein was a Certificated Engineer, but was not a Doctor.

— The style is sometimes incorrect; the text is sprinkled with spelling and grammatical errors but, manifestly, the writer had a good command of French, which was not the case with Gerstein.

— T Va *could* have been composed, at least in part, from Gerstein’s answers to the questions put to him by the members of the O.R.C.G.

One notices a great many errors in proper names which could arise from a faulty understanding of these names pronounced, probably with a German accent, by the ex-SS officer. We give five examples of these mistakes:

- in the names of towns:

Marbrug instead of Marburg

Aachem instead of Aachen

Pirmasinz instead of Pirmasens

- in the names of people:

Hockelchoc instead of Heckenholt

Kraatz instead of Krantz

Then again, at the beginning of his other “confessions,” Gerstein writes of his *exclusion* from the Nazi party; in T Va, one reads *execution*. Here, this might be faulty pronunciation or a mistake in reading.

— In review, other errors encourage one rather to think that the writer of the O.R.C.G. used the handwritten texts composed by their prisoner. For example, there is in T Va a question of the collection of garments among the *Danish* people when evidently the *German* people is meant. Has *dänisch* been read instead of *deutsch*?

— Finally, the composition of T Va by the French is attested to by typical French expressions, such as *bachot* (baccalaureate examination) to translate Abitur, and above all *E.M.* (*État-Major*) to designate the senior ranks of the SS.

T Va has been utilized for two other versions which contain some differences from their original; these are:

— T Vb, text in French, of which we have a photocopy from the National Archives in Washington;

— T Vc, text in English, which carries at the center of its first page the word “Translation”; our photocopy of T Vc comes from the C.D.J.C. (the Center for Contemporary Jewish Documentation) in Paris, which obtained its copy of this document from the Israeli police.

Differences noted between the model T Va and the variants T Vb and T Vc

1. T Vb

There are very few differences, since the mistakes in the proper names and even the grammatical errors have in general been faithfully copied. However, we have remarked the three differences noted below:

— T Va² reads: “28 minutes later, rare are those who still live,” and in T Vb: “26 minutes.” This is probably a typing error.

— T Va reads: “about 8,000 Polish clerics have been forced to dig their graves,” and in T Vb: “about 2,000.”

— On page 9, line 21 of T Vb, typing carelessness makes one sentence incomprehensible, because several lines of T Va have been omitted.

2. T Vc

This translation in English of T Vb carries on the last page the same declassification endorsement by the National Archives in Washington as its model T Vb, which is 01.0813. The transcription is faithful with the same errors in the spelling of proper names; the

same abbreviation E.M., which is meaningless in English; the same number of victims among the Polish clergy, 2,000 as in T Vb and not 8,000 as in T Va. On the other hand, the translation has been touched up a little on two occasions.

— T Vb reads, page 3 lines 30–31: “Truly, the S.D. and its boss the R.S.H.A. really went to sleep in this case³ and in exemplary fashion made a gardener of the goat”; whereas, in T Vc page 3, lines 38–39, one simply reads: “Truly, the S.D. and their chief the R.S.H.A. did sleep in this case and took the very wrong man.” This story of the gardener–goat is not clear either for a Frenchman or a Britisher; on the other hand, P. Joffroy (*op. cit.*, p. 92, note 2) quotes a German saying: “einen Bock zum Gärtner machen,” which means “make a gardener of a goat.”

— In T Va and T Vb (page 6, line 4) one reads: “no one could ever retrieve the assorted pairs in the pile 35 to 40 meters high.” Thirty–five to 40 meters represent a height of ten to twelve stories; the translator, probably alert to this unlikelihood, is satisfied to write in T Vc: “otherwise it would have been impossible later to identify the pairs in a heap of boots of *several meters*.”

Utilization of T Vc by Léon Poliakov

In 1964, Léon Poliakov published “The Kurt Gerstein File” (M.J. pages 4–20); in his presentation of Gerstein’s account, he writes: “He [Gerstein] was interned by the French military authorities in a requisitioned hotel of the little town of Rottweil. There he composed his narration between 21 April and 5 May and he himself made a shortened translation in French, typewritten by him. On 5 May 1945, the Allied military investigators, Major D.C. Evans and M.J.W. Haught, met Gerstein at Rottweil, by chance as they state, interrogated him, and translated into English the whole text of his narration.”

This passage gives rise to the following comments:

a — Léon Poliakov does not seem to be aware that T Vc (the English text) is only the translation of T Vb which is itself the more or less faithful transcription of T Va; thus, by the same token, he does not know that T Va is the work of the O.R.C.G.

b — Did Léon Poliakov have before him the English text which indicates clearly “May 6, 1945,” and not May 5?

c — The English translation was not made by the two Allied officers but some weeks later; as mentioned, T Va must have been sent to Professor Gros in London in a letter dated 6 June 1945.

In regard to Léon Poliakov’s assertions, Pierre Vidal–Naquet was overconfident when he declared publicly in 1981 that T Vc was “the

interpretation given by the American and British investigators in their own report . . .” (C.R. stenogr. 1981).

We have previously had occasion to state that Léon Poliakov had merely taken six excerpts from T Vc which he then inserted, after translation into French, into different places of T II. Of these six excerpts, there are only two which present a text conforming to the original text.

REPUBLIC OF FRANCE

Liberty • Equality • Fraternity

Presidency of the French Government

Paris, 6 June 1945

General Directorate of Studies and Research, (references illegible), Head of the Bureau for the Investigation of War Criminals

to *Monsieur le Professor Gros*, CARLTON GARDENS 4, LONDON

I have the honor to send you herewith the copy of the interrogation by my office of the person concerned: GERSTEIN OF TUBINGEN.

This document will not fail, I believe, to interest you.

In any event, I leave it in your care to decide whether it should be sent to the WAR CRIMES COMMISSION.

I am satisfied with the first results obtained by the French teams for investigation of war criminals who are working in Germany, and I inform you that my services are at the present time in possession of 41,000 record cards on war criminals.

G.MANTOUT

3. Texts of Uncertain Origin

These are T III and T VI, both in the German language and both typewritten; neither one is signed.

— T III carries the date of 4 May 1945 but was only discovered, in circumstances which are not clear, in the spring of 1946;

— T VI carries the date of 6 May 1945; it was subjected to a “Staff Evidence Analysis” by the American authorities on 26 October 1945, on the basis of a partial translation of the document made 13 August 1945.

We shall study each of these two “confessions” in turn but begin with T VI; as we shall give the reasons, which seem to us valid, for believing that T III was written last.

Text T VI

On the subject of T VI, Saul Friedländer writes (K.G., page 11):

“A German text of the report dated Tübingen (actually Rottweil, Hotel Mohren), 6 May 1945 comes from a certain Stass who, him-

self, presumably received it from a police official of Hersfeld in the summer of 1945, when he returned from the camp of Buchenwald to Cologne."

What is known of this person Stass? What is known of the policeman of Hersfeld of whom Friedländer himself writes in the conditional tense? To our knowledge, nothing is known of these two persons. Frau Gerstein, questioned by us, replied that she had never heard of them; she added that her husband had enough wealth of imagination (*Einfallsreichtum*) to find the means to have his evidence circulate during his captivity at Rottweil, where he enjoyed relative liberty.

After an examination by the "Documentation Division" of Major Storey, T VI was put on file in the series PS with the number 2170. It was used at least once in the course of a trial: that of Dr. Peters of the DEGESCH company, which was held at Frankfurt. The DEGESCH company, in which Dr. Peters occupied an important position, supplied Zyklon B to the German army, in particular to the service responsible for the disinfection of the concentration camps. Therefore Dr. Peters had had fairly continuous relations with the SS Obersturmführer Gerstein.

Three "confessions" were examined simultaneously by the Frankfurt Tribunal: T II, T III, and T VI; the Tribunal drew attention, without comment, to certain differences between the three texts, notably the quantity of hydrocyanic acid which Gerstein was ordered to transport to the Belzec camp, namely 100 kgs in T II and T III, compared to 260 kgs in T IV.

Principal characteristics of T VI

1. *Physical aspect*

The typewriting is very expert; evidently, this is the work of a professional, who never failed, in particular, to type on the bottom right-hand corner of each page, underlined, the first word of the following page. This cannot be the work of Gerstein, who was only an occasional typist.

The typewriter used had a German keyboard; one notices especially the character ß, which is specifically Germanic.

2. *Numerous errors in the proper names*

The errors in the proper names are surprising in a work so carefully typed. We shall give some examples:

— page 1: "... in Tübingen, Hartenstrasse 24" instead of Gartenstrasse 24 (Gerstein's address); "Schemann" instead of Schmemmann (maiden name of Gerstein's mother); "Grafenesk" instead of Grafeneck; "Arnheim" instead of Arnhem.

— page 13: “Dorothea Schult” instead of Schulz; “Heinz Nebenthau” instead of Nebelthau.

The above errors could possibly be explained by a mistaken understanding on the part of the typist, if the text had been dictated. But in regard to the error noticed on page 12, it is difficult to come up with a theory to explain it. Gerstein’s Berlin address was actually *Bülowlstrasse* 47, and one reads *Lützowstrasse* 47.

3. Comparison between T V and T VI.

On the whole, T VI takes up again, in the German language, the content of T V, which is a copy of the interrogation by the French services of the O.R.C.G.

Previously we have seen that T V contains crude errors and passages composed in a very awkward manner, although the writer of it may not be Gerstein but either one or several persons whose native language is indisputably French.

In T VI, the crude mistakes have been corrected. Thus, the *execution* decided by the Tribunal of the NSDAP becomes the *expulsion*; the collection from the *Danish* people becomes the collection from the *German* people; *Hockelchoc* becomes *Heckenholt*, and so on. As for the awkward passages of T V, they have either been suppressed, shortened, or presented in a more correct form.

4. Discrepancies noted in the German text

We have previously said that Gerstein could not have typed T VI. Could he nevertheless have dictated the text of T VI to a typist? We have serious doubts on this question; for if such was the case, one could not understand how Gerstein, expressing himself in German, would commit the two errors we point out as follows:

1st error— On page 2 of T VI one reads: “ . . . *ich wurde daher sehr bald Leutnant und Oberleutnant*,” meaning: “ . . . I very quickly became second, then first lieutenant.”

In this phrase, one picks up a double error. Firstly, if Gerstein very quickly became sublieutenant he had then to wait until 20 April 1943 to be promoted lieutenant. And then—which is more disconcerting—the ranks mentioned in T VI did not exist in the SS. Gerstein was never *Leutnant* and *Oberleutnant* but rather *Untersturmführer* and *Obersturmführer*.

In the texts T I, T II, and T IV composed in French, Gerstein wrote: “I became lieutenant,” for he thus gave the equivalent rank in the French army. He had no reason whatsoever to use incorrect terms in order to designate his successive ranks in his mother tongue. Moreover, when on 19 July 1945 in Paris he was interrogated by the Military Examining Magistrate, he replied in German, in the presence of an interpreter: “I was named Untersturmführer F” (F being the first letter of the word Fachführer which means: responsible

specialist, or specially assigned to a post of responsibility).

2nd error— On page 8 of T VI we read: “*Ich traf dann Herrn von Otter noch 2 mal in der schwedischen Gesandtschaft,*” which means: “I met Mr. von Otter twice again, *in* the Swedish Legation.”

In the French texts T I and T II, Gerstein wrote that he had seen Baron von Otter again *once* (T I) or *twice* (T II) at the Swedish Legation. The German language is more precise than French in the use of prepositions. Thus, *at* (in French) the Swedish Legation can quite well mean: *at the interior* of the Swedish Legation or *nearby* or *in front of* the Swedish Legation.

Where in fact was it that Gerstein saw von Otter again? We know the answer from the Swedish diplomat who, on several occasions, said that Gerstein popped up in front of him in a street near the Swedish Legation (Joffroy, *op. cit.* page 173 and Friedländer, K.G., page 115).

If Gerstein had been the author of T VI, then he would have written in German: *bei* (or *vor*) *der Schwedischen Gesandtschaft*, but certainly not *in*, *i.e.*, inside, since he did not enter the legation.

We have also been intrigued by another passage in T VI. On page 4, line 9 we read: “*Sonderkommando Belzec der Waffen SS*”; which is the inscription on a placard at the entrance to the Belzec camp. If this wording has been exactly reproduced in T VI, it is difficult to understand why Gerstein would have translated it in the French versions T I and T II by “Place of service of the SS Army.” The *Obersturmführer* has proved by all the texts he has written in our language that he knew French sufficiently to translate by “Special Commando” (or yet “Special Team”) of Belzec of the Waffen SS.” If Gerstein has written “place of service,” one can believe that he has read on the placard “*Dienststelle*” and not “*Sonderkommando*.” Is not the word “*Sonderkommando*” a fabrication by the writers of T VI? We know that the word “*Sonder*,” which is never used on its own, is very current in Germany. For example, one speaks of “*Sonderzug*” (special train), of “*Sondernummer*” (special edition of a journal) *etc.* But after the Second World War, some people have tried to give this word “*Sonder*” a special meaning, quasi-diabolic. Thus “*Sonderaktion*” (special action) and/or “*Sonderbehandlung*” (special treatment) signify for them, without their offering convincing proof to support such a meaning: an action or treatment having extermination as its goal, especially extermination in the gas chambers.

In conclusion, the study we have just made of T VI encourages us to think that this document was “constructed” on the basis of the texts written in French, notably on the basis of T V. We may hypothesize that if it was thought expedient to compose a text in German, it was because it seemed hardly plausible that the German Gerstein

should not have left any account of his visit to Belzec and Treblinka written in his native language.

Text T III

This text, typewritten in German, dated 4 May 1945, unsigned, was found belatedly and in very special circumstances. We noted previously that no explanation has been given for the origin of T VI; two intermediaries of whom we do not even know whether they existed are the only evidence adduced by Saul Friedländer. An explanation has also been given for the origin of T III, but it seems hardly convincing to us.

A document forgotten for almost one year

In 1953, Hans Rothfels wrote the following lines on this subject: *“Es ist daher als ein glücklicher Umstand zu betrachten, dass sich eine deutsche Parallelfassung zu dem französischen Hauptstück von PS–1553 gefunden hat. Sie ist datiert: Rottweil, 4 Mai 1945, ist also am Tag vor der amerikanischen Vernehmung verfasst. Nach Angabe von Frau Gerstein hat ihr Mann diese Niederschrift für sie im Hotel Mohren in Rottweil deponiert, wo sie erst nach einem Jahr sie abholen lassen konnte, weil ihr die Tatsache der Hinterlegung vorher nicht bekannt war”* (op.cit. page 179), which means: “It is to be considered a happy circumstance that a German copy, parallel to the key document in French PS–1553, should have been found. It is dated: Rottweil, 4 May 1945; so it was composed one day before the American interrogation. According to Frau Gerstein’s statement, her husband left this document for her at the Hotel Mohren in Rottweil, where she could send for it, though not until a year later, because she did not previously know of its being left there.”

The above quotation from the historian Rothfels provokes several questions:

a. Gerstein mentioned on the first page of T III his address at Tübingen. Rottweil is less than 150 kms distant from Tübingen. The German postal services, disrupted during the weeks following the capitulation of 8 May 1945, did not stay paralyzed a whole year. Why did not the managers of the Hotel Mohren inform Frau Gerstein that she had a letter awaiting her collection since 26 May 1945, the day Gerstein left Rottweil to follow the French officers of Military Security to Constance?

b. Is it plausible that French Military Security would not have checked whether their prisoner left personal papers at the Hotel Mohren?

c. It seems to us even less plausible that Gerstein, unbeknown to

the management of the hotel and unbeknown to the French officers, would have been able to conceal documents in his room or elsewhere in the hotel; documents which would not be retrieved until one year later.

The role of the Pastor of Hagen/Westphalia

Hans Rothfels took his information from Frau Gerstein (*nach Angabe von Frau Gerstein*); we also questioned the widow on this point through correspondence, written in German, and we obtained interesting details from her. We set out the essentials as follows:

— Frau Gerstein learned at the end of January 1946 by a letter from Pastor Rehling⁴ of Hagen/Westphalia that her husband had written a narration of his experience in the SS, while he was a prisoner of the French troops.

— She succeeded in obtaining from Pastor Rehling the name of the place where the SS officer had been prisoner: Rottweil.

— *She did not go to Rottweil herself*, but requested a student to ask at the Hotel Mohren whether her husband had left anything for her.

— The student returned to Tübingen with the last letter written by the prisoner to his wife, on 26 May 1945; attached to this letter were two or perhaps three of Gerstein's narrations, namely T III and T IV for certain; Frau Gerstein is not positive about T I.

Who was this student who served as messenger?

We wished to know more about this student who served as intermediary. Frau Gerstein replied to us with a certain reticence. She informed us, by her letter of 15 October 1982, that so far as she could recall he was a student who stayed only one or two semesters at Tübingen; she added that she had had no news of him for decades and that she did not know his address. On our insistence, she gave us by letter dated 21 March 1983 the name of this student: August Pott (and Frau Gerstein has moreover expressed reservations on the question of this name, which she quotes only from memory).

One day we shall try again to find this student and clarify his rôle in the discovery of this document. It is the most important of the "confessions" written in German and the only one we know of to have been published, although with cuts, first in Germany and then in other countries, notably France. But those researches which we intend to make are outside the scope of our present thesis.

How was the Pastor of Hagen informed?

We have previously written that Pastor Rehling was the origin of the discovery of T III; here are the circumstances: on 27 January 1946 the pastor wrote to Kurt Gerstein (whose death six months

Größere evangel. (luth.)

Kirchengemeinde Hagen

Pfarrer ~~Kayser~~ Rehling

Ruf 22000

Hagen,

Siemens-Str. 26 27.1.46

X [Lieber Herr Gerstein! Durch Zufall bekam ich ein Blatt in der Hand, das am 6.5. datiert ist und Ihre Erlebnisse im Dienst des Gesundheitshauptamtes wiedergibt: Da Sie mich als Zeugen nennen, so wurde ich gefragt, ob das stimme. So kam ein Lebenszeichen Ihnen in meine Hand. Da die Erlebnisse, die geschildert werden, dem übereinstimmen, was Sie uns in vergangenen Zeiten erzählt hat, so war es mir eine frohe Gewisheit, daß Sie zu den "Überlebenden" dieser furchtbaren Katastrophe gehören. Da Sie solange kein Lebenszeichen hatten durchgeben können, waren wir alle hier schon in steter Sorge. Im Dezember war Martin Niemöller bei uns. Er hatte Berlin versucht, einen Amerikaner für Sie zu interessieren, daß er versuchen möchte, Sie ausfindig zu machen. Danach hörte ich von Ihrem Bruder, daß zwar noch kein direktes Lebenszeichen vorläge, aber irgendwie eine Nachricht durch Ihre Gattin eingelaufen sei, daß Sie noch lebten. Inzwischen wird gewiß mehr durch Ihren Vater zu erfahren sein, wenn man ihn nur erreichen kann. - Als bald in der Einrichtung der Militär-Reg.Stellen hatte ich hier auf Sie

aufmerksam gemacht. Falls Sie irgendwo den Alliierten in die Hände gefallen sein sollten, so sei ich bereit, zu bezeugen, daß Sie in die SS gegangen seien mit dem ausgesprochenen Willen, Leuten aus dem KZ zu helfen. Nun scheint es ja, daß man Ihnen Glauben geschenkt hat. Vor einigen Tagen lernte ich den letzten Kommandeur des Führerbegleitregimentes aus "Großdeutschland" kennen, einen 26jähr. Major mit Eichenlaub und Schwertern, einen prachtvollen Mann, der noch in Zorn geriet, wenn einer der Namen aus dem Hauptquartier genannt wurde. Seitdem ich einen solchen jungen Offizier kennen gelernt habe, dem man die absolute Anständigkeit so aus den Augen leuchten sah, habe ich wieder ein wenig Hoffnung für unser Deutsches Volk schöpfen gelernt. - Im März "(26.)" erwarten wir Martin Niemöller in Hagen. Hoffentlich wird es Ihnen auch einmal möglich sein, bald nach Hagen zu kommen. - Vom Hauptbahnhof bis zum Lahnhof Oberhagen ist noch kein Haus wieder heil. Wir wohnen im Pfarrhaus Kayser in den Parterrezimmern. - Gott befohlen! In der Hoffnung, bald von Ihnen und den Ihren Gutes zu hören, grüßt Sie herzlich auch im Namen meiner Frau Ihr

Rehling

Größere evangel. (luth.)
Kirchengemeinde Hagen

Pfarrer ~~Kehling~~ Kehling

Ruf 22000

Hagen,
Siemens-Str. 20

26.2.46.-

Liebe Frau Gerstein!

Ihr Brief erfüllt uns mit großer Trauer. Denn wir hatten bestimmt angenommen, daß Kurt bei Ihnen sei. Mir lag ein Bericht über Kurts Erlebnisse vor, der durch den Bruder unserer Organistin, die allerdings nicht mehr in Hagen wohnt, hierher von Süddeutschland mitgebracht. Datiert war er aus dem Mai vergangenen Jahres aus einem "Hotel Mohren" aus einem württembergischen Dörfchen! Darunter in Klammern die Tübinger Anschrift. Da der Inhalt ganz unzweideutig auf Kurt schließen ließ, so hatte ich nicht die mindesten Zweifel, daß Kurt nicht zuhause sein könnte. Inzwischen weiß ich, daß Martin Niemöller schon von Berlin aus versucht hatte, einen Amerikaner auf Kurts Spur zu setzen. Ferner tauchte hier kürzlich ein Freund von Kurt auf, der während des Krieges mit ihm zusammen gewesen war. Er wußte noch zu berichten, daß Kurt Martin Niemöllers Koffer aus Berlin heraus gebracht hatte und in Annaberg hatte stehen lassen müssen. Diese Nachricht ist inzwischen an Martin Niemöller weitergegeben, auch dies, daß Kurt sich dann weiter nach Tübingen gewandt habe und dicht bei T. in französische Gefangenschaft gefallen ist. Zweifellos wird Martin Niemöller versucht haben, durch franz.kirchl.Stellen mit Kurt Verbindung zu bekommen. Martin Niemöller wohnt Büdingen bei Gießen. Schreiben Sie ihm ruhig.- Die Anfrage aus Dahl wird wohl auf den gleichen Bericht zurückgehen, der mir vorlag.- Ich bin von keiner alliierten Dienststelle wegen Kurt gefragt. Ich habe nur bei der hiesigen englischen Dienststelle vor 3/4 Jahren einen Bericht eingereicht, daß, falls Kurt in ihre Hand gefallen sein sollte, ich jederzeit bezeugen könne, daß er gegen die SS Gräueltaten alles Menschenmögliche unternommen habe. Dann habe ich das etliche Dinge aufgezählt, die Kurt mir in diesen Jahren erzählt hatte.- Nun wünsche ich Ihnen von Herzen baldige gute Nachricht! Ihnen, Ihren Kindern, Ihrem Manne ein der Ferne- ein herzliches "Gott befohlen!" Ihr

Pastor Kehling

before was unknown to him) at his address in Tübingen. His letter begins as follows: "Dear Herr Gerstein, By chance I have received a paper (*Blatt*) which is dated 6 May and relates your experiences in the Health Service of the SS. As you name me as witness, I am asked whether that is true . . ."

The pastor received a letter from Frau Gerstein in which she informed him that her husband was not at Tübingen but a prisoner of the French, and that she had had no news at all of him since the end of the war.

On 26 February 1946, the pastor replied to the questions that Frau Gerstein had asked him: "A report (*Bericht*) of the experiences of Kurt has been shown to me; this report was brought here from the south of Germany by the brother of the organist who, to tell the truth, no longer lives at Hagen. It was dated May of last year from a 'Hotel Mohren' of a village in Wurtemberg."

This paper (*Blatt*) of which the pastor writes, extracted from a report (*Bericht*) dated 6 May 1945, seems to be page 13 of the "confession" in German of 6 May 1945, marked PS-2170 (T VI). On lines 24 and 25 of this page 13 one reads: "*Pfarrer Rehling, Hagen Lutherkirche, führendes Mitglied der westf. Bekenntniskirche*," which means: "Pastor Rehling, Lutheran Church of Hagen, leading member of the Confessional Church of Westphalia."

In summary, the conditions of the "discovery" of T III in the spring of 1946 seem to us a little confused.

A study of the typewriting of T III

We have already given some characteristics of T III in our Chapter 1, "Establishment of the texts." It will be recalled that this version is not signed. Twenty-four half-pages, numbered 1 to 24, and eight run over half-pages of supplements, numbered 1 to 8, are typewritten.

1. *The keyboard is German*

The typewriter used is obviously a machine with a German keyboard; for example, the capital A's and O's are sometimes surmounted with the diæresis, which is not possible with a French keyboard. All the same, it is curious to remark that the Germanic letter ß was never used; it has always been replaced with two "s" characters, contrary to what we noted in T VI.

It is clear to the naked eye that the three typewritten versions attributed to Gerstein's typewriting necessitated the use of three machines with different keyboards. Therefore we do not understand the assertion made by Saul Friedländer (*op.cit.* page 179): "It is on the machine [of Pastor Hecklinger of Rottweil] that [Gerstein] will first copy his report in French, and then write the reports in German

dated 4 and 6 May." If the three documents are compared side by side, what Saul Friedländer proposes as a certainty is immediately proved false.

2. *Irregularity of the spelling*

When Gerstein wrote the French handwritten versions, he systematically replaced the "u" with "ue." One notices the same characteristic in the French typewritten version (which we designate T II), for which a French keyboard was used.

But in the German version T III, there is no consistency in the spelling, sometimes for the same word. Here are some examples:

- half-page 1, 1st line: *Tübingen*
- half-page 1, 13th line: *Tuebingen*
- half-page 2, 1st line: *Münster*
- half-page 2, 8th line: *Bruening*
- half-page 8, 4th line: *Fuehrer*
- half-page 8, 7th line: *Führer*

We have noticed another anomaly. This relates to the word "Nazi," curiously written with a final "e," which is scarcely German; thus one reads:

- half-page 2, 1st line: *Nazie–Statt*
- half-page 2, 19th line: *staats (nazie) feindlicher*
- half-page 4, 5th line: *Nazie–Sache*

Finally, on line 9 of half-page 17 there is a serious spelling mistake; one reads "... *in typisch himmler–schen Altdeutschen Stiel*" instead of "*Stil*," intending to mean: "... in the typical Himmlerian old-German style."

There is a word "*Stiel*," but it has a completely different meaning: it can be translated as "handle" (of a tool), rod (of a curtain), *etc.*

It is not without interest to note that when Hans Rothfels reproduced T III in 1953 (*op.cit.*) he corrected all the mistakes and anomalies.

3. *Discrepancies identical to those of T VI*

One finds again in T III the two mistakes which would be difficult to explain if Gerstein were its author; namely, the incorrectness in the ranks of the SS and the use of the preposition "in" to convey that Gerstein had met von Otter near the Swedish Legation. The comments previously made on the subject of the inscription "*Sonderkommando*" are equally valid for T III.

4. *One half-page handwritten*

Between the typewritten half-page numbered 7 and the typewritten half page numbered 8 there is inserted a handwritten half-page which carries at the top on the left the note "*zu 7, am Schluss zusetzen*," meaning "to 7, to go at the end." It is difficult to explain the presence of this handwritten half-page in the midst of twenty-four

typewritten half-pages. The more so, in that the text of this half-page is devoid of interest. Almost exclusively, it gives details of the difficulties Gerstein met in disinfecting large quantities of textiles. There is no corresponding text at all in the other "confessions." It does not connect either with the preceding half-page 7 or the half-page 8 which follows. It could easily be deleted, so much so that Hans Rothfels reproduced it between parentheses in 1953 (*op.cit.* pages 188–189).

For our part, as we have grave doubts as to the authenticity of T III, we tend to believe that this half-page which was indisputably composed by Gerstein, was placed there to lend credence to the idea that the whole composition is authentic.

5. *The supplements*

We have said that eight typewritten half-pages, undated, represent the supplements (*Ergänzungen*) to T III.

The first supplement, which moreover does not carry a number, is almost illegible, so defective is the typing of it. It was copied on a separate sheet headed "*Leseabschrift*," which is to say "legible copy." This first supplement is nevertheless valuable because it ends with four words apparently handwritten by Gerstein.

In regard to this supplement we make the same remark as for the handwritten half-page: the presence of the handwritten words encourages the reader to silence his doubts on the authenticity of the whole "confession."

Conclusion

At the end of our study, we arrive at the same conclusion for T III and for T VI. These two "confessions" in German seem to us to have been fabricated from disparate documents left by Gerstein; documents which were not publishable in their original form.

In our next chapter on "The veracity of the texts," we shall demonstrate that although *all* the confessions contain peculiarities and improbabilities, T III has fewer of them. One senses a desire in the author of T III to eliminate or tone down the flagrant improbabilities in order to make T III a little less incredible than the other versions. This reinforces our conviction that T III, "discovered" nearly one year after 4 May 1945—the presumed date of its composition—is in fact an account written several months after Gerstein's death when the five other versions had already been known and analyzed.

Supplements and Drafts

The authenticity of the supplements and drafts (as distinct from “Additions”) is obvious; thus it does not call for study.

Only one of these supplements requires comment: the typewritten page, in French, headed “*post-scriptum*,” and carrying the number 16.

1. *The keyboard of the machine is German*

We have examined the typing style of this text. The typewriter used had a German keyboard. To be certain of this, it suffices to look closely at the grave accents, the acute accents, and the circumflex accents; they have all been added, either by the machine or by hand.

In addition, one typing mistake is significant. On the tenth line before the end of the page, one notices that the typist has struck a “2” instead of quotation marks. On German keyboard, the “2” and the quotation marks are on the same key, but this is not the case with a French keyboard, for example.

2. *The typewriter used for this supplement is not the one used for T III*

We have made an enlargement of a short excerpt from the supplement in question and from T III. In both of these passages there are letters in common and even a common word: BERLIN. A close examination shows that the word BERLIN is 4.3 cms in the excerpt from T III and only 4.1 cms in the excerpt from the supplement. A German typewriter has been used for both texts, but it is not the same typewriter.⁵

We suggest an hypothesis: the postscript numbered 16 could have been typed on a machine loaned by Pastor Hecklinger of Rottweil. One can believe that the first fifteen pages, which are not discoverable either at L.K.A. or elsewhere, were also typed on this machine.

In 1961, the pastor supplied to the police of Israel, in connection with the Eichmann trial, an affidavit according to which Gerstein had used his typewriter about mid-May 1945. He states in this attestation that he owned *two* machines, one of them the machine on which he typed the affidavit itself. A brief examination of the type shows that if Gerstein did use a typewriter belonging to the pastor, it cannot be the one which the pastor used in 1961 (compare, for example, the style of the number 4). Use of the other machine, whose typing characteristics we do not know, remains a possibility; this is why we have suggested an hypothesis concerning the “*post-scriptum*” document numbered 16.

Thus we do not accuse Pastor Hecklinger of a falsehood, but the fact remains that none of the three complete typewritten “confessions” known to us—that is to say T II, T III, and T VI—seems to

Technische Hochschule.

Berlin-Charlottenburg.
4 cm 3.

en evangelischen Jugend

red. Focht, chef de rayon

t Berlin-Lichterfelde,
4 cm 4.

sturmführer, Itzehoe Ho

Jena.--

have been typed on the pastor's machine.

Gerstein's Letter to His Wife Dated 26 May 1945

There is no doubt whatsoever of the authenticity of the letter. In the preceding chapter we have discussed the importance we attach to the following phrase, which we translate "If you have difficulties of any sort, go with the report, which I attach, to the military governor." One will notice that Gerstein writes the "report" and not the "reports."

We think that the document mentioned by Gerstein was written in French since the military governor of Tübingen, where Gerstein's family was living, was French.

The Obersturmführer had acquired the habit since 26 April 1945 of writing out his "confessions" directly in French for the benefit of the French officers whose prisoner he was. However, Frau Gerstein received two reports attached to the letter of 26 May 1945, one in French and one in German. Let us recall that her receipt of this letter and the documents attached did not occur until the spring of 1946.

Since we have the conviction, in default of certitude, that T III is not authentic, we formulate a hypothesis:

The phrase written by Gerstein in his last letter of 26 May 1945 was sufficiently imprecise to allow a substitution of the documents attached. If Gerstein had written to his wife "go to the military governor with the report handwritten *in French* which is attached," there would have been no ambiguity. But Gerstein did not specify the language used in composing the document. We suspect manipulators of having attached T III to the letter of 26 May 1945. This manoeuvre would be the origin of what Hans Rothfels calls "the happy circumstance of the discovery of a German copy of the Gerstein document."

These manipulators did not however destroy the text handwritten in French (T IV); so that the widow received a letter accompanied by two reports; the one in French (T IV) and the other in German (T III).

The total silence observed by writers with respect to T IV might thus be explained by the fact that there it concerned a document which was superfluous, not to say troublesome, having no reason to exist. According to the official story, in the spring of 1946, Elfriede Gerstein had received a letter from her husband dated 26 May 1945, accompanied by *only one* document, written in *German* (T III).

Frau Gerstein's declaration concerning T IV

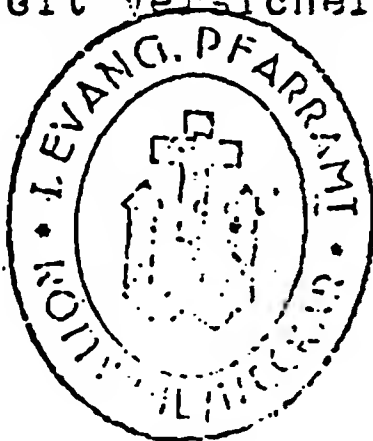
We have found at Bielefeld (LKA) information which confirms our hypothesis; it is contained in a document which carries the file classification *Bestand 5, 2 No 14, Fasc 1*. It relates to questions asked of Frau Gerstein and her replies; the text is written on white

VANG. PFARRAMT
- ROTTWEIL A. N.
Fernsprecher 261

Rottweil a. N., den 15. Febr. 1961.
Ruhr-Christi-Str. 21

Bescheinigung.

Hiedurch bescheinige ich, daß Herr Gerstein etwa Mitte Mai 1945 auf meiner Schreibmaschine einen Bericht über seine Tätigkeit als Spitzel innerhalb der SS und seinen Verkehr mit ausländischen Stellen niedergeschrieben hat. Er hielt sich damals in Rottweil unter französischem Gewahrsam auf, bis er auf ungeklärte Weise verschleppt wurde. Die Schreibmaschine war wahrscheinlich dieselbe, mit der diese Zeilen geschrieben wurden - Marke Mercedes Prima, etwa aus dem Jahr 1935 stammend. Es könnte aber auch meine alte Schreibmaschine Orga Privat aus dem Jahr 1925 gewesen sein, die ich in jener unruhigen Zeit wieder hervorholte, ^{die} aber heute nicht mehr vorhanden ist. Leider kann ich nicht mehr mit Bestimmtheit sagen, welche Schreibmaschine ich damals in Benutzung hatte; aber daß Herr Gerstein bei mir und auf meiner Schreibmaschine mindestens den größten Teil seines Berichtes niedergeschrieben hat, kann ich mit Bestimmtheit versichern.



Z.B.: Pfarrer

Hanklinger

Translations of the last six lines of the affidavit:

Unfortunately, I can no longer say with certainty which typewriter I was then using; but that Mr. Gerstein typed at least the larger part of his report at my home and on my typewriter, I can affirm with certainty.

Zu 1.): Was ist Frau Gerstein über des Zustandekommen des französischen (Rottweil, 26. April 1945) und des englischen Teils (5.5.45!!!, nicht 43) bekannt?

Mein Mann hatte sich am 22. April 1945 freiwillig auf der französischen Kommandantur in Reutlingen gemeldet und war über Tübingen nach Rottweil gebracht worden. (In Tübingen hat er seine Familie nicht angetroffen, da wir kurz vorher die Wohnung hatten räumen müssen.) Es dürfte ihm sehr bald klar geworden sein, daß er nicht bei jedem westlichen Alliierten die Kenntnis der deutschen Sprache und die Bereitwilligkeit, sich ihrer zu bedienen, voraussetzen konnte, und daß es angebracht sei, seinen Bericht während der Rottweiler Wartezeit in französischer Sprache zu Papier zu bringen. Ihn auch in englischer Sprache ~~niederzulegen~~ niederzulegen, war ihm nicht möglich, da er die englische Sprache nicht in der Schule gelernt, sondern sich nur selbst im Laufe der Jahre einige Worte angeeignet hatte.

Ob er noch Gelegenheit finden würde, mündlich zu berichten, dürfte für ihn in dem ersten Nachkriegs-Chaos außerdem recht ungewiß gewesen sein. Es konnte manch einem daran gelegen sein, ihn zum Schweigen zu bringen, und es will mir scheinen, daß sein Tod in dieser Richtung noch Geheimnisse birgt.

xx [Dem letzten Brief meines Mannes an mich (handschriftlich), den ich auszugsweise folgen lasse, lag auch ein handschriftlicher französischer Bericht - ohne Unterschrift - bei, mit dem er mir vermutlich die Übersetzung ~~des~~ seines deutschen Berichtes zwecks Vorlage bei der französischen Militärregierung erleichtern wollte; er trägt das Datum des 6.5.45.

paper without either heading or signature: it is therefore impossible to identify the person who asked the questions.

We requested clarification on this point from the Obersturmführer's widow. By letter dated 30 June 1982, she replied to us that she had been interrogated by the Tribunal of Tübingen on 16 February 1961, at the request of the State of Israel, within the framework of the Eichmann trial.

Here is one of the questions to which the widow had to reply: "What does Frau Gerstein know about the French text (Rottweil 26 April 1945)...?" The reply, translated, of Frau Gerstein: "To the last letter from my husband (handwritten), an extract of which I shall hereafter give, was attached a handwritten report in French—without signature—with which he probably wanted to help me in the translation of his report written in German, to serve as a model for the French Military Governor; it has the date 6.5.45."

This sentence of Frau Gerstein's is not very clear in German; our translation, which we wished to make as faithfully as possible, is not clear either. This lack of clarity reflects the perplexity of the widow. She was asked a question on the subject of the French text dated 26 April 1945, but Frau Gerstein did not know this text. At the end of the interrogation moreover she asked that a copy be sent to her (that is the PS-1553 — T II).

The widow had in hand only one French text and it is dated 6 May 1945. She found attached to the last letter from her husband a document in German, made up of 24 half pages plus eight half pages of supplementary material. She was persuaded—and an effort was certainly made to reinforce her conviction—that this very full account in German was *the* report mentioned in the letter from her husband. Confronted, in addition, with a very much shorter French text, she assumed that it was the beginning of the translation of the German text. The interruption of the translation could be explained by a lack of time on the part of the Obersturmführer; and as a matter of fact, this same 26 May he had to leave Rottweil abruptly to be transferred near Lake Constance.

It is appropriate to mention that Frau Gerstein, having learned French in the course of her studies, would have been able—and her husband was aware of this—to finish the translation for the purpose of the French Military Governor of Tübingen.

Nevertheless, the supposition of Frau Gerstein does not provide a valid explanation, because the two texts are too greatly different for one to be mistaken for the beginning of the translation of the other. For Frau Gerstein, the presence of T IV next to T III as documents attached to the last letter from her husband seemed inexplicable. For us, on the contrary, it is the presence of T III together with T IV

which intrigues us. It reinforces our suspicion that T III is not authentic and that its pretended discovery in the spring of 1946 is a fraud.

Interrogations by the Military Justice Department

There are no grounds for questioning their authority. They were conducted according to the customary rules: each page is initialled and the signatures of the persons present at the interrogations appear at the bottom of the last page.

Article Appearing in “France–Soir” 4 July 1945

We lack any means to study the authenticity of a document of which we are given a facsimile. On the other hand, it seems superfluous to analyze the content of the article. How could we distinguish, on the one hand, what Gerstein actually wrote in this new unknown text of his “confessions” and, on the other, what the journalist interpreted?

Request for a Lawyer

The authenticity of this text, handwritten and signed, is hardly in doubt. At the most, one could be surprised at the use of capital letters. Gerstein’s handwriting was difficult to decipher. He perhaps wished to be more legible.

Fragments of Documents Found After Gerstein’s Death

These fragments of documents having disappeared, it would be pointless to discuss their authenticity.

Photocopy of letter dated 27.1.46 to Kurt Gerstein from Pastor Rehling.

Photocopy of letter dated 26.2.46 to Frau Gerstein from Pastor Rehling.

Photocopy of lettering samples of the two typewriters.

Photocopy of affidavit dated 15 February 1961 signed by Pastor Rehling — referred to on page 138.

Translation of the 6 last lines of the affidavit:

“Unfortunately, I can no longer say with certainty what machine I then had in use; that Herr Gerstein typed in my house and on my typewriter at least the greater part of his report I can confirm with certainty.”

Photocopy of extract of Frau Gerstein’s interrogation of 26 February 1961. (The English translation of the last five lines is given.)

Footnotes to Chapter Two

1. A French expression comprising all the English-speaking peoples. —R.V.P.
2. For T Va, we do not specify on what line the differences are found. A photocopy of T.Va is not included in this thesis, as we were not permitted by the Direction of Military Justice to make one.
3. Gerstein is alluding to his assignment to the SS Institute of Hygiene in spite of his past, which was known to the police; the “gardener-goat” corresponds more or less to our “chien dans un jeu de quilles” [dog in a game of ninepins].
4. Further on, we shall explain how the Pastor was informed.
5. We have made a further verification which confirms the foregoing: on a line of 16.8 cms we have counted 62 typewriting spaces in the text T III, as against 65 in the supplement written in French.

Chapter III

Veracity of the Texts

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General Remarks

For the confessions of Gerstein to present some interest, it would be necessary to demonstrate that they are *probable*. Thus, one understands the extreme importance of the chapter we devote to their veracity.

Chapter I established the rigorous exactitude of the texts. It was necessary for this work to be done because, on many occasions, very unfaithful reproductions of these texts have been published; in these circumstances it became more and more difficult, and even impossible, to distinguish between those reproductions which were faithful and those which were not.

Chapter II aimed at determining the authenticity of each of the versions of the “confessions.”

Thus chapters I and II have prepared the ground for chapter III.

The “confessions” of the former SS officer constitute one of the keystones, perhaps even the principal keystone, of the edifice constructed by writers who affirm as unquestionable the existence of homicidal gas chambers in the Nazi concentration camps. Such a keystone should have the quality, acknowledged by all, of an historic document. Do the “confessions” of Gerstein have this indisputable quality? Such is the question to which historians and researchers cannot avoid an answer.

We have, in the course of this thesis, and especially in the column of “Observations” in the comparative tables, expressed our doubts and called attention to particular improbabilities.

We should now like to treat the question as a whole. Perhaps it is advisable to recall the principal points of the “confessions” as they occur, in spite of some variants in each of the “confessions.” Conse-

quently we exclude the supplements, which do not exist in T I or T II.

What Does Gerstein Say in His “Confessions?”

Our choice:

Among the six known versions of the “confessions,” we select the typewritten text in French dated 26 April 1945, designated by the reference PS-1553, that is to say, the text which we name T II.

Our reasons:

— T II is the most complete of the three texts of which the material authenticity is the least doubtful; on the bottom of page 6 is Gerstein’s handwritten signature.

— On the other hand, T II is not the most complete text of the six versions; it does not have any supplements (*Ergänzungen*); but the supplementary material represent for us, as for Hans Rothfels, *Hörensagen* (hearsay) to which it seems superfluous to refer.

— Furthermore, T II is the text best known in France. Although it was rejected by the Grand Tribunal of Nürnberg 20 January 1946, it was later utilized on the occasion of other trials in Germany, as well as in Jerusalem during the Eichmann trial.

We have made the same cuts as in our typewritten transcription and for the same reasons (please see page 19).

Summary of the “Confessions” Properly So-Called

1. Gerstein voluntarily joins the SS in March 1941 to see what is going on and to reveal it later to the whole world.

2. Assigned to the Health and Hygiene Service, he makes improvements in the disinfection of the camps and is thereby instrumental in stemming epidemics; his successes earn him promotion to Untersturmführer F (second lieutenant specialist) in November 1941.

3. In spite of the efforts of those who, knowing of his prewar activities against the state, want his expulsion from the SS, in January 1942 he becomes the head of the Technical Disinfection Service.

4. On 8 June, 1942, he receives the order to supply a camp in Poland with prussic acid, of which camp only the driver of the lorry knows the geographical location.

5. At Lublin, he is received by the SS Gruppenführer Globocnik who tells him: there are three camps functioning and one in preparation. What is happening in these camps is a state secret. You, Gerstein, will have two tasks to fulfill:

— disinfect very large quantities of clothing;

— improve our gas-chamber installation by replacing the exhaust gasses of our old diesel engine with prussic acid.

6. He has visited the camps of Belzec, Treblinka and Majdanek, but not that of Sobibor. He specifies that the three camps which are working (Belzec, Sobibor, and Treblinka) can exterminate altogether 60,000 persons per day.

7. The next day, 18 August 1942, he visits the camp at Belzec and sees the whole of the installations.

8. On 19 August 1942 he is present at the arrival of a train of deportees; at their disrobing; at the handing-in of objects of value, at the hair-cutting of the women; at the cramming of about 750 persons standing upright into a chamber of 25 m² in area and 45 m³ in volume; at their death throes, when the Diesel starts working, after 2 hours 49 minutes. Through a little window he observes all the details of this agony, which lasts 32 minutes, stopwatch in hand. He sees the cadavers brought out by the Jews of the working-party, who salvage gold teeth and precious objects hidden in certain parts of the body.

9. He sees the cadavers piled into large ditches near the gas chambers; then he says that, later on, the cadavers were burned on railway rails in the open air.

10. He estimates the number of victims at Belzec and Treblinka at 25 million.

11. He is begged by Wirth, the camp commandant, to propose nothing to Berlin for changing the installations, which are giving him satisfaction.

12. He says that he has had the prussic acid buried, under the pretext that it had become unuseable during transportation.

13. On 20 August 1942, he visits the camp at Treblinka, a simple replica of Belzec but much bigger; he participates at a banquet, at the end of which there are speeches praising the humanitarian rôle of the concentration camps.

14. In the Warsaw-Berlin train he meets a Swedish diplomat, Baron von Otter, to whom he reveals what he has seen at Belzec.

15. He tries unsuccessfully to meet the Papal Nuncio in Berlin; he sees von Otter again in the street; he makes a verbal report to Dr. Winter, the secretary of the Catholic bishop of Berlin.

16. At the beginning of 1944, he receives the order to purchase large quantities of prussic acid; he sends it to Auschwitz and Oranienburg, but sees to it that it is used for disinfection; he has the invoices written in his name in order to be more at liberty in the utilization of the product; he specifies that he has on him the invoices for 2,175 kgs.

17. He reports the events which have presumably taken place in the various concentration camps that he has not himself visited.

18. He thinks that it is at Auschwitz and at Mauthausen that there have been the most atrocities.

19. He declares under oath that his statements were true.

Is There Agreement Between All the Writers on a Common Text of Reference for the “Confessions”?

Although it is fundamental, it is difficult to reply to this question. Other than the Revisionist historians, there is only Pierre Joffroy who could give unreserved assent; in his book (*op.cit.* pages 283–290) he copies exactly the version PS–1553 (T II).

The other non–Revisionist writers have only presented extracts, sometimes correct, but more often distorted, of the original text. One could say that they are in agreement on the broad lines of the texts of the “confessions” but do not stop to analyze what they call details. For us, it is not so much a matter of details as the very numerous facts which themselves constitute the fabric of the account.

Thus, Léon Poliakov tells us of the cramming of 700 to 800 persons into a gas chamber but he arbitrarily changes the 25 m² to 93 m² and on two occasions eliminates the 45 m³. The German writer Robert Neumann respects the 25 m² and the 45 m³ but reduces the number of victims to 170/180 from 700/800.

These are two extreme cases.

The historian Hans Rothfels has not distorted the German text of 4 May 1945 (T III). He has, however made cuts, but he has always drawn attention to these by explanatory notes. For example, he has deleted the passage where Gerstein writes of the speeches made at Treblinka in praise of the humanitarian rôle of the concentration camps; he has also deleted certain events related by Gerstein, events which presumably took place elsewhere than at Belzec and Treblinka.; These are the *Hörensagen* (things of which Gerstein had merely heard), as Hans Rothfels clearly indicates (*op.cit.* page 180, note 6).

The non–revisionist historians often employ an identical formula in French and in German; they say that the evidence of Gerstein is “indisputable as to the essentials,” which means for them that it is necessary to believe Gerstein’s account without applying an ordered analysis of the text. But in our view, the credibility or incredibility of the whole of the “confessions” depends on such an analysis.

For our part, we have made a very close and careful reading of the six known “confessions” and we have summarized a substantial number of improbabilities and peculiarities, without claiming however that our list is complete.

Statement of the Improbabilities and Peculiarities in the “Confessions” of Gerstein

1. Gerstein, who has twice been the victim of the Nazis before the war, voluntarily joins the SS and does so *with the recommendation of the Gestapo*.

2. At Christmas 1941, Gerstein is on the point of being chased out of the SS because the Nazi tribunal has learned that he was working there as second lieutenant specialist (Untersturmführer F). But six months later, on 8 June 1942, he is made responsible for *an ultrasecret mission*: he has to transport to the Belzec camp 100 kgs of hydrocyanic acid (“confessions” of 26.4.45, T II; and of 4.5.45, T III) or 260 kgs (“confessions” of 6.5.45, T IV, T V, and T VI).

3. At Kollin, near Prague, Gerstein—who pretends in other passages of his “confessions” to be so prudent because of the risk of reprisals against himself and his family—states that he has let the *Czech personnel* of the Kollin factory know (T VI) that the hydrocyanic acid was intended for killing people (T III, T IV, and T V).

4. At Lublin, the SS general Globocnik, who has never seen Gerstein or his travelling companion Pfannenstiel previously, reveals to them immediately “*the biggest secret of the Reich*.”

5. Gerstein reports other remarks by Globocnik; they concern the three camps which are functioning, for which the SS general presumably gave the following details:

Belzec: maximum 15,000 per day

Sobibor: 20,000 per day maximum

Treblinka: 25,000 per day maximum.

One reads nothing further in the manuscripts handwritten in French (T I, T II, and T IV) nor in the German version (T III). These figures could represent the respective totals of deportees arriving daily in those camps. But in T V and T VI one reads additionally the word “executions.” The last two versions even given an average utilization for Belzec and Treblinka, namely, 11,000 for Belzec (T V) and 13,500 for Treblinka (T VI).

We have consulted the *Encyclopædia Judaica* to discover the dates of functioning of the three camps. For Belzec, it was not easy to know whether the extermination mentioned by the *Encyclopædia Judaica* came to an end on 31 December 1942 or in the spring of 1943.

Did the exterminations of which Gerstein writes take place every day? On this point, the “confessions” do not inform us. We set out below the results of our calculations.

The statistics of the *Encyclopædia Judaica* apparently do not rest on any scientific basis. To believe these figures, there would be dead

	<i>Encyclo. Judaica</i>
<div><div><div><div><div>Belzec, spring 1942 to end 1942</div><div>280 days</div></div><div><div>if 11,000 daily: 3,080,000</div><div>if 15,000 daily: 4,200,000</div></div></div><div><div><div>from spring 1942 to spring 1943</div><div>365 days</div></div><div><div>if 11,000 daily: 4,015,000</div><div>if 15,000 daily: 5,475,000</div></div></div></div></div>	600,000
<div><div><div><div>Sobibor, May 1942 to 14 Oct. 1943</div><div>530 days</div></div><div><div>20,000 daily: 10,600,000</div></div></div></div>	250,000
<div><div><div><div>Treblinka, July 23, 1942 to 14 Oct. 1943</div><div>450 days</div></div><div><div>if 13,500 daily: 6,075,000</div><div>if 25,000 daily: 11,250,000</div></div></div></div>	750,000
<div><div><div><div>Totals</div><div>Total minimum: 23,770,000</div><div>Total maximum: 31,525,000</div><div>Total average: 27,647,500</div></div></div></div>	1,600,000

at Belzec, Sobibor, and Treblinka a total of 1,600,000 persons. To believe Gerstein's figures, one would arrive at a total of about 28,000,000 people, a total which is seventeen to eighteen times greater than that of *Encyclopædia Judaica*.

In a book titled *Treblinka* a certain Jean-François Steiner has written: "At Treblinka, an average of 15,000 Jews were gassed every day." After having read this sentence, David Rousset was scandalized and made as much known in the periodical *Candide* (18 April 1966, page 18) where he wrote: "The figure is evidently false. It suffices for these devil's advocates [*i.e.*, those who deny genocide] to seize on this figure of 15,000 per day and to show the absurdity of it by a simple calculation, in order to do incalculable harm." Does David Rousset know that according to Gerstein's "confessions" there would have been in three small Polish camps—including Treblinka—from a minimum of 44,500 victims to a maximum of 60,000 victims every day?

6. Of the four camps mentioned by Globocnik, Gerstein claims to have visited three. But in five of his "confessions" the camp *not visited* is *Sobibor* and in one "confession" (T V) it is *Maidanek* that he has *not seen*.

7. Hitler and Himmler supposedly visited Belzec on 15 August 1942. Now, it is *historically* verified that this is a falsehood (see Professor Hans Rothfels—*Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, April 1953, No. 2). Some have alleged that this was mere boasting by the SS general. Impossible, because the lie would quickly have been discovered by Gerstein's conversations with the officials at Belzec.

8. Dimensions of the chambers. In the "confessions" of 26 April 1945 (T I and T II): 4m x 5m x 1.9 m, that is, 20 m^2 and 38 m^3 . In the "confessions" of the 4 and 6 of May 1945 (T III, T V and T VI): 5m x 5m x 1.9 m, which is 25 m^2 and 47.5 m^3 . But the engineer Gerstein writes in all his "confessions": 25 m^2 and 45 m^3 .

9. A figure of 6,700 persons in 45 freight cars, which gives *more than 148 persons per car*. There were 1,450 already dead on arrival; there thus remained 5,250 persons alive.

10. A little boy of 3–4 years, apparently alone, as Gerstein writes of him, distributes the small strings successively to 5,250 deportees to tie up their shoes together.

11. A pile of shoes 35 to 40 meters high (in the majority of the "confessions") or 25 meters (T III); in the first case, a height of ten to twelve stories and, in the second case, a height of seven to eight stories. How are such heights climbed to place shoes there?

12. The figures of 700–800 persons *standing* on 25 m^2 , in 45 m^3 (this is a *constant* of all the versions). Can one imagine a room of this area and this volume which would contain about 750 persons stand-

ing one against the other? Thirty persons on one square meter?

13. Unrealistic arithmetic (in two “confessions” of 6 May 1945: T V and T VI). More than half are children. Weight: 35 kgs (T V) or 30 kgs (T VI). Thus, Gerstein adds, 25,250 kgs per chamber. How this *precise* total, which is neither divisible by 35 nor 30?

14. The police captain Wirth, chief of the Belzec camp, interrogates Gerstein *minutely* (*sic*) to learn whether he prefers the people to die in a lighted or unlighted room (T V and T VI).

15. Gerstein says he is present at the gassing. He coolly consults his stopwatch. The Diesel engine does not start. Unperturbed and inactive, Gerstein counts the passing minutes: 50 minutes, then 70 minutes. Finally, at the end of 2 hours, 49 minutes, the Diesel starts working. He says he records that at the end of 25 minutes most of the victims are dead, that at the end of 28 minutes a few still survive, and at the end of 32 minutes everyone is dead.

If engineer Gerstein is so cold-blooded, the arithmetical errors pointed out in 8 above cannot be explained by the fact that he would have been distressed. On the other hand, even supposing one could concentrate 700–800 persons standing upright into a space of 25 square meters, then these persons would not have been able to survive for 2 hours, 49 minutes; they would rapidly have exhausted the oxygen. Finally, if we suppose that nevertheless they could have survived, how would Gerstein, looking through a small window, have been able to discern in this extraordinarily compact group those who were dead and those living? In fact, the dead would not have been able to fall to the floor.

16. In all the “confessions” it is said that the gassing was done with an old Diesel engine. The word “Diesel” is repeated three or four times, according to the version, in the relevant passage. Previously, Gerstein, when telling of his interview with the SS general Globocnik, said that the latter told him from the start of the conversation that the gas chambers worked with the exhaust gases of an old *Diesel* engine.

Now the Diesel is an internal combustion engine which gives off little carbon monoxide (CO), an odorless and fatal gas, but a great deal of carbon dioxide (CO₂), a suffocating gas which makes a person ill but does not cause death until after a lengthy period of time. It would have been more efficient to use a gasoline engine.

17. Gerstein declares (T V and T VI): “There are not *ten* persons who have seen what I have seen and who will see it...I am one of the *five* men who have seen all these installations.” Now, in his account, Gerstein himself quotes the names of persons who, between 15 and 19 August, would either have assisted or been present at the massacres of Belzec. There are already more than ten for this brief period

of five days. These are:

— Hitler, Himmler, Dr. Linden (15 August)

— Globocnik, Wirth, Obermeyer, Heckenholt (every day)

— Pfannenstiel, Gerstein (19 August)

— anonymous persons: a big SS man with a clergyman-like voice who reassures the deportees on the fate that awaits them; an Unterscharführer (noncommissioned officer) of the service who informs Gerstein about the utilization of the women's hair; an SS man who, in his country dialect, states that the deportees can wait naked in the open air in no matter what temperature since they are there in order to die; the SS men who with their horsewhips lash the deportees entering the gas chamber; a Ukrainian who helps Heckenholt to start the engine; *etc.*

In any case, how can we accept it that the massive exterminations, perpetrated over many months and in several camps, could have fewer than ten witnesses?

18. The bodies are thrown into ditches of 100m x 20m x 12m situated near the gas chambers. The depth of *12 meters* represents 3 to 4 stories of a building. The bodies are covered with a layer of *ten* centimeters of sand; only some heads and some arms emerge. Here we have conditions favorable for the development of an epidemic which would not have spared either the SS or their auxiliaries.

19. The number of victims in the camps of Belzec and Treblinka: *25 million* (T II) or *20 million* (T V and T VI). These figures are unbelievable (see the opinion of David Rousset on Point 5).

20. Wirth proposes to Gerstein to change nothing in the method of gassing. Thus a simple captain of police *refuses to follow the orders* of an SS general, since Globocnik had ordered Gerstein to change the method.

21. In T V, Gerstein says: "What is curious is that no one asked me a single question in Berlin." (He repeats the same thing to Commandant Mattéi, who interrogated him in Paris on 19 July 1945, and he provokes the following reply: "You are charged with an ultrasecret mission, you do not accomplish it, and no one asks you to make a report on your return. That was hardly customary in the German army.")

22. He has had the hydrocyanic acid buried on the pretext that it had deteriorated during transportation and had become dangerous. It would be impossible to accept this statement by Gerstein, unless on condition that we be given details of the operation. Now, during the interrogation of 19 July 1945, Gerstein states that he was transporting 45 bottles of hydrocyanic acid, one of which had got in bad condition; he adds that these 45 bottles were hidden 1200 meters from the Belzec camp. It must have been no small job to hide 45

bottles. Gerstein claims to have been helped by the driver, whom he did not know previously and did not see again after their journey together in Poland, and who, according to Gerstein, belonged to the Central Security Service.

23. In T I, Gerstein says that after his meeting in the train with the Swedish diplomat, von Otter, he went to see him again at the Swedish Legation in Berlin *one more time*. In all the other “confessions” Gerstein says that he saw von Otter again *twice* (the diplomat remembers only one time).

24. Gerstein tells us that from the beginning of 1944, 8,500 kgs of hydrocyanic acid were stocked at Berlin; he supplies no proof for specifying that quantity of poison. Then he goes on to speculate on the homicidal intentions of SS Sturmbannführer Günther, who would have given him the command to place these very large orders; Gerstein then reviews the categories of possible victims, estimating them at 8 million.

25. On the advice of Gerstein, the hydrocyanic acid is dispatched to the camps of Auschwitz and Oranienburg; the Obersturmführer does what is necessary to insure that this acid will be used *only for disinfection*. In none of his “confessions” does Gerstein say that he has been to Auschwitz. In his interrogation of 19 July 1945 he does not mention Auschwitz among the camps he has visited. How has he been able to act at a distance?

26. Günther envisaged killing with hydrocyanic acid *in the open air*, in the moats of Maria-Theresienstadt, the Jews who walked there. Gerstein dissuaded Günther from carrying out this project which was, moreover, impracticable. However, Gerstein learned that in spite of everything the operation had taken place.

Hydrocyanic acid, which is highly volatile, cannot be used in this manner “in the open air.”

27. Gerstein has *seen* homosexuals disappear in a furnace (several *thousands* in T V and T VI; several *hundreds* in T III) in *a single day* (T II, T V, and T VI) or in *several* days (T III).

28. In Poland, it is *testified to*, that to kill people, they were made to climb the stairway of a blast furnace; that they were executed at the top of this stairway with a pistol shot and they were thrown in the chimney of the blast furnace (T III, T V, T VI). Can one imagine the scene? The people climb one by one to the top of the “stairway”; an SS man or an auxiliary waits for them at the summit in the fumes of the blast furnace in order to kill them.

29. At Auschwitz, where Gerstein has never been, *several million* children are killed by applying a pad of hydrocyanic acid under the nose (T V and T VI). The same method of killing children is mentioned in T II and T III, but no mention is made of several million.

Etc., etc.

Over and above the improbabilities and oddities of which the above list is certainly not complete, one can question the validity of certain statements which do not have the quality of eyewitness testimony. In effect, Gerstein has stayed hardly two days at Belzec; the first day (18 August 1942) he tells us himself that he has not seen very much; he has only had suspicions. The next day (19 August 1942) he was at Treblinka and in the evening he took the train from Warsaw to Berlin.

How, in these circumstances, can he write: "...after some days the bodies swelled and the whole rose an average of 2–3 meters because of the gas which formed in the cadavers. After some days, the swelling finished, the bodies fell together"?

The German historian Hans Rothfels has, on the other hand, forbore to publish the whole of the supplements as well as certain passages of the principal "confession," alleging that it could only be a matter of *Hörensagen* (things learned by hearsay). And yet, certain of these extracts not published by Hans Rothfels are presented by Gerstein as eyewitness evidence. Thus one can read, for example:

—*I have myself seen* experiments continued up till death on living persons in the concentration camp of Ravensbrück;

— At Belzec, *I had the impression* that all were dead . . .;

— *I remember* some gripping impressions;

etc.

It is appropriate also to note the phrases in which Gerstein implicates two of his compatriots, Professor Dr. Pfannenstiel on the one hand, and Dr. Gerhard Peters on the other hand. Both of them have denied having had the attitude or made the remarks that Gerstein has attributed to them.

Hans Rothfels has suppressed all the passages disputed by these two persons; he quotes Professor Pfannenstiel only once, in his explanatory notes, and he completely avoids naming Dr. Peters, whom he refers to simply as the manager of the DEGESCH company.

As for the rest of the "confessions," they are essentially made up of what Olga Wormser-Migot calls recurring themes "so identical to fifty other recollections—including those of the memoirs of Hoess" (*op. cit.*, page 426).

Do There Exist Degrees of Improbability Between One Version and Another of the "Confessions" of Gerstein?

All the versions contain a certain number of improbabilities and oddities which make them unworthy of belief. All the same, the incredibility is more or less flagrant according to the version.

One remarks a sort of escalation of improbability in passing from T I to T II and then to T V.

The case of T IV is very special; the principal “confession” is very short: the improbabilities are evidently less numerous; but on the other hand, T IV includes supplements where one notices statements difficult to accept, statements which one finds again with variants in T III, T V, and T VI.

In the chapter on the authenticity of the texts, in default of proofs which are impossible to find, a certain number of strong presumptions have been advanced to sustain our hypothesis that the two versions in German (T III and T VI) are forgeries. Thus one notices a relative diminution of the improbabilities in passing from T V to T VI, then to T III.

T VI, the version dated 6 May 1945, on the whole resembles T V, but with the elimination of glaring mistakes, the sometimes nonsensical details, the correction of certain errors in the proper names, *etc.* Thanks to these arrangements, T VI has been judged worthy to join the series PS under the number 2170. But T VI has been little utilized and, to our knowledge, has never been published, even in part.

The elaboration of T III was more careful; its “discovery,” only in the spring of 1946, gave its writers sufficient time to present a text in Gerstein’s mother tongue which less spontaneously arouses the skepticism of the reader. It is T III, which was published for the first time by Hans Rothfels in 1953 (*op. cit.*, pages 177–194) and often recopied by other writers, German as well as foreign. In France, the translation of T III by Léon Poliakov and Josef Wulf (*Le IIIe Reich et les Juifs/The IIIrd Reich and the Jews*) has fairly often been utilized; this was the case quite recently when, in 1982, François de Fontette published in the collection “*Que sais-je?*” (What do I know?): *Histoire de l’antisémitisme* (History of Anti-Semitism). On pages 120 and 121, one can read extracts from this version of 4 May 1945—very incomplete extracts to which we shall revert later.

If one accepts our hypothesis of forgery for T III, one can pick out some of the intentions of the writers, which we set out below:

1. *T III is in harmony with T II on several points*

T II (PS–1553) was already known when T III was “discovered.” PS–1553 had been submitted to the Grand Tribunal of Nürnberg; it was desirable that there not be differences too flagrant between T II and T III.

a. The command given to Gerstein to transport hydrocyanic acid to the Belzec camp concerned 100 kgs in the versions of 26 April and 260 kgs in the versions of 6 May. T III, dated May 4, is in line with T II and mentions 100 kgs.

b. Gerstein often mangled proper names; in this way, he writes

Lindner, the name of the ministerial counsellor, whose name is actually *Linden*. One reads *Lindner* in T I and T IV (both handwritten) and in T II (PS-1553), while T V and T VI give the correct name *Linden*. T III again follows T II and refers to *Lindner*.

2. *T III eliminates improbabilities*

Certain improbabilities in T II perhaps explain the refusal of the Grand Tribunal of Nürnberg to take this document PS-1553 into consideration. T III eliminates some of them.

a. Number of victims at Belzec and at Treblinka: 25 million (T II) or 20 million (T V and T VI). Prudently, T III does not offer any estimate.

b. A little boy of 3–4 years distributes lengths of string to more than 5,000 persons to tie their shoes together in pairs (T I, T II, T V, and T VI). In T III, the little boy of 3–4 years has disappeared.

c. Dimensions of the gas chamber: 4m x 5m x 1.9m in T II, which is 20 square meters and 38 cubic meters (T I and T II); and 5m x 5m x 1.9m which is 25 m² and 47.5 m³ (T V and T VI). Now, we read in all the versions: 25 m², 45 m³. T III has chosen the dimensions which give an exact area and a near enough volume; in this instance, T III does not follow T II (PS-1553).

3. *T III tones down certain improbabilities*

a. In the majority of versions, it is a question of a pile of shoes of 35 to 40 meters (10 to 12 stories). In T III, has it been thought to make the statement more credible by reducing the height to 25 meters? This height still represents 7 to 8 stories!

b. “*Several thousand* homosexuals have disappeared in an oven in a single day,” one reads in four versions. In T III, *several hundreds* of homosexuals have disappeared in *some* days.

c. At Auschwitz, *several million* children have been killed by the application of a pad of hydrocyanic acid (T V and T VI). In T III, the children die in the same way but they are not several million.

d. We read in T VI (supplements), written in Gerstein’s own hand: “Being busy with their work, all of a sudden they saw *some* who were moving.” This refers to the presumed cadavers and an SS Rottenführer who finishes them off by crushing their skulls with an iron bar that was already handy. One finds the same sinister anecdote in the supplements of T III, but the “*some*” are reduced to “two.”

e. Gerstein has seen (T IV, supplements) a little boy of 3 years *thrown* into the chamber. In T III, the little boy does not escape the chamber but he is *pushed there with gentleness*.

The various points outlined above all contribute, we repeat, to make of T III not a credible “confession,” but merely the least incredible. These findings reinforce, if need be, our conviction that T III is a text carefully fabricated in German from the versions in

French (T I, T II, T IV, and T V).

Chapter IV

Gerstein's "Confessions" and the Views of Their Readers

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I. Before the Publication of the "Confessions"

Until 1951, the texts composed by Gerstein between 26 April and 6 May 1945 were read only by a very limited number of persons, essentially the officers of the Allied intelligence services, magistrates of various nationalities, and some rare journalists.¹

For these first readers, the reality of the massive exterminations in the gas chambers was never in doubt; the "confessions" of Gerstein simply served to reinforce their convictions. But, far from considering the SS officer as an anti-Nazi who had chosen the self-appointed task of revealing to the outside world the atrocities until then unknown, these unconditional enemies of National Socialist Germany perceived in Gerstein a war criminal who had chosen an original method of defense to exonerate himself. If they noticed improbabilities in the texts, which were most likely read in haste, these improbabilities were to them additional reasons to reject the good faith of the writer of those texts, without much doubting the authenticity of the facts exposed.

Gerstein lost his life in this venture. His suicide is plausible, but it is not certain; in Germany, his family and friends do not believe in his suicide. It is true that the circumstances of his death are somewhat obscure, and we are hard put to explain why his wife was not informed of his death until 1948.

At the Grand Tribunal of Nürnberg, the document PS-1553 (T II) was not accepted; on French insistence, only some invoices for Zyklon B attached to the principal document were taken into consideration.

In 1950 at Tübingen, the denazification court refused to rehabilitate the former SS officer; it granted him only "extenuating circumstances" and classified him in a category of minor Nazis (*Belasteten*).

II. After the Publication of the “Confessions”

In our introduction, we have followed the various transformations of the “confessions” and have written of the three authors who each devoted a book to the biography of Gerstein.

It was of cardinal importance to us, at the beginning of this thesis, to identify the versions known to the authors and to evaluate their fidelity in the complete or partial reproductions of such or such text.

It will be recalled that Léon Poliakov in France and Hans Rothfels in Germany were the drum majors with whom the majority of non-Revisionists have fallen into step. For this reason, the followers of Léon Poliakov have recopied the serious distortions of the texts imputable to him. As for the followers of Hans Rothfels, they have not questioned the statements of this historian who, without furnishing the slightest proof, attested that the German version of 4 May 1945 (which we call T III) is authentic. These same followers have duplicated the cuts in the texts made by Hans Rothfels; but generally their explanatory notes are less numerous and less clear, so much so that the reader has difficulty in understanding the reasons put forth by Hans Rothfels. For Rothfels, the cuts are justified for the following two reasons:

— certain passages of the “confession” and the whole of the supplements do not constitute eyewitness evidence, these being the *Hörensagen* (things learned by hearsay);

— certain comments made by Gerstein in regarding to the two Germans, Professor W. Pfannenstiel and Dr. Peters of the DEGESCH company, have been vigorously denied by the persons concerned.

Arriving at the end of our work, after having established the texts, studied their authenticity, and evaluated their truthfulness, we propose to classify in three broad categories the writers who dealt with the Gerstein case.

A. Those Who Do Not Doubt

Pierre Joffroy has made himself the hagiographer of Kurt Gerstein and leads the small band of those untroubled by doubt. In the course of a long investigation, he has gathered a great deal of evidence on the strangeness of the character and behavior of Gerstein. In this he sees the mark of sainthood, the divine seal, which makes the elect of God a person misunderstood by simple mortals, an exceptional being condemned to solitude on earth. In regard to the improbabilities contained in the “confessions,” he reproduces a certain number of them without making the least comment. Perhaps he has not noticed them as such?

Helmut Franz, in his book published in 1964, expresses the loyalty he has preserved for his old friend Kurt Gerstein; all the same he recalls in several instances that the engineer's propensity towards obsessions and eccentricities had often baffled him. In his regret for not having spontaneously believed the former SS officer's revelations, Franz gives to his work the character of a self-criticism.

B. Those Who Do Not Believe

Paul Rassinier, the pioneer to whom every historian of the Revisionist school refers, was the first to be intrigued by the strange account of Gerstein. He made allusion to it for the first time in 1961 in his book *Ulysse trahi par les siens* (Ulysses betrayed by his own), page 112. He found it surprising that the Nürnberg Military Tribunal, when trying certain concentration camp doctors in January 1947, had been able to accept as evidence of the charge a text in which one reads notably that "the Jews were asphyxiated in groups of 700 to 800 in gas chambers which had 25 m² floor area and 1.8m in height." It is necessary to note that Rassinier never had in his hands either the original documents of Gerstein's "confessions" nor the file of the French Military Justice Department, which disappeared in November 1945. Not having been able to make his own first-hand researches, he reviewed what the newspapers, magazines, and books had written on the subject, then manifested his surprise at the stupefying variations with which he was confronted. But Rassinier did not know what the former *Obersturmführer* had actually written; he began, moreover, by very seriously doubting the authenticity of the document. He made some suppositions on the origin of the narrative, on the extortion of "confessions," and on the place and conditions of Gerstein's death which were not accurate.

Paul Rassinier was obliged to make hypotheses because his only sources of information were the books of Léon Poliakov, the publications of Hans Rothfels, and other non-Revisionist authors. One of the latter, Georges Weller, endeavored to ridicule the errors, real or otherwise, by devoting some pages to them in the publication of the Center for Contemporary Jewish Documentation of Paris entitled *La Solution finale et la Mythomanie néo-nazie* (The Final Solution and the Neo-Nazi Mythomania), dated 1977. Relying on documentation which Rassinier was never able to consult, he re-established the truth on some secondary points but failed in his main purpose: to make an incredible story credible. As for the "liberties" taken by Léon Poliakov in his reproductions of the "confessions," Weller does not even mention them. *On this point, nevertheless, Rassinier was completely correct.* It was Paul Rassinier who took the initiative, as early

as 1964, in his book *Le Drame des Juifs Européens* (The Drama of the European Jews), pages 93–107, to compare side by side two publications by Léon Poliakov with an extract from PS–1553 (T II):

— one taken from the book *Le Bréviaire de la Haine* (The Breviary of Hate) 1960 edition;

— the other taken from the book *Le Procès de Jérusalem* (The Jerusalem Trial) 1961.

This comparison already reveals some important differences, which are absolutely inexplicable.

It was again Paul Rassinier who protested against the exaggerated rôle attributed to Gerstein in the spreading by word of mouth of information on the camps of Belzec and Treblinka, since some have maintained, without proof, that this information was spread as far as Rome. In his book *L'Opération Vicaire* (Operation Vicar) Rassinier courageously defended the memory of Pius XII, which had been attacked in a manner that in our view was dishonest, by Rolf Hochhuth, author of the play *Le Vicaire* (The Deputy) and by Saul Friedländer, author of the book *Pie XII et le IIIe Reich* (Pius XII and the Third Reich). We mention here only the two principal protagonists who set the trend, to the extent that it has become fashionable to set oneself up as a judge of ethics in order to question the attitude of the Pope during the Second World War: it is officially recognized that Pius XII unreservedly condemned racial persecution and that he intervened on behalf of the Jews, but he is reproached for not having denounced the existence of the gas chambers. Could he have done so on the faith of reports which, like those of Kurt Gerstein, bristled with improbabilities? As papal nuncio in Bavaria in 1914, he had occasion to hear rumors of the same sort, the war propaganda of the Entente. (It is to be noted that neither Churchill, nor Roosevelt, nor Stalin, nor any governmental authority of the countries opposed to the Third Reich had spoken of homicidal gas chambers.) Confronted with the undeniable excesses committed against civilian populations by all belligerents, the Pope could only protect, as far as he was able, the millions of Catholics who existed in one or the other camp, as well as the non-Catholics who requested his help.

After Paul Rassinier, and because the majority of them have read Rassinier, authors have expressed their skepticism in regard to Gerstein's account. Naturally these include Revisionists such as Arthur R. Butz (*op. cit.*, pages 251–258), Wilhelm Stäglich (*Myth.*, pages 10–11), Robert Faurisson (*Mem. Def.*, page 119 and *Rep. à P. V–N*, pages 42–43), but also other writers who, on this delicate subject, have expressed a nonconformist opinion.

Thus the historian André Brissaud wrote in 1969: "The evidence of Kurt Gerstein, of whom some would wish to make a 'saint' today,

is at the least suspect, as are the very strange circumstances surrounding his 'suicide' and the 'discovery' of his diary" (*Ord. Noir*, page 456).

In 1980, in volume III of his memoirs, the writer Raymond Abellio tells us that he has read the works of Paul Rassinier and the declaration of the thirty-four historians published in *Le Monde* of 21 February 1979 (see pages 11 *et seq.*). Abellio adds that he knows of the Faurisson Affair² from the book of Serge Thion, *Vérité historique ou vérité politique?* (Historical Truth or Political Truth?). He expresses his feelings about the Gerstein case in the following sentence: "This is a truly enigmatic personage, this Kurt Gerstein who says he is 'horrified' by what he sees at Belzec and who, in the same moment, takes out his stopwatch to time, without explaining to us why, the death agony of the victims" (*Sol. Inv.*, page 432, note 4).

We have already mentioned in this thesis the delicately balanced point of view of the historian Olga Wormser-Migot, who does not adhere to Revisionist views but who has nevertheless asked herself "many questions on the subject of Gerstein and his confessions without really succeeding in elucidating the obscurities" (*op.cit.*, page 426). She adds, some lines further on: "Personalities such as that of Gerstein, of Sorge, of many double agents, are not easily decipherable."

For our part, we do not believe that Gerstein was a double agent. To be sure, Pastor Rehling of Hagen/Westphalia, who had known Gerstein well since 1928, reported to Pierre Joffroy (*op.cit.*, pages 41–42) that Gerstein had boasted of having performed espionage in the service of the *Reichswehr*, notably in France in the region of Thionville. But, here again, no proof of this mysterious activity can be put forward. On the other hand, what appears to be very much more certain is that Gerstein did not benefit, during the war, from any support either in his own country or abroad; that he had no contact among Germany's enemies—whether French, English-speaking, or Dutch—to whom he reported his activities in the SS and whose directives he followed. From his early years, Gerstein demonstrated the need to intrigue his friends thoroughly by attributing to himself a rôle which, moreover, he perhaps wound up believing in himself.³

Now, in what did Gerstein's resistance to Hitler consist?

— During the war, he spoke to his friends, to pastors, and to a diplomat of what he allegedly saw at Belzec. Who actually believed him at the time? Moreover, should he have been believed?

— He claims to have done away with one or perhaps two deliveries of hydrocyanic acid. If that is true, did he thus prevent a hypothetical homicidal act? Or did he simply reduce the stock of the product reserved for disinfection of the camps and for which he was

responsible?

His death—whether or not one accepts the official version of suicide—in the military prison of Cherche-Midi is not the death of a double or triple agent, capable of appealing to his protectors; it is the death of a loner and, in our opinion, of a mythomaniac caught in the trap of his own devising: the very judicious questions of a French Examining Magistrate with a logical mind had rendered him unstable to the point where he saw no way out but death, a death as mysterious as his supposed activities in the SS had been.

We do not adopt therefore the hypothesis made by Olga Wormser-Migot, but we observe that her overall assessment is near to ours. In fact, she writes in her thesis (*op.cit.* page 11, note at the bottom of the page): "...the confession of Gerstein, of which many points remain obscure, notably the conditions, the place, the time of its composition. Since the use of his confession in *Le Vicaire* (The Deputy) of Rolf Hochhuth, Gerstein appears more as a symbol than as an historic personality." Since the publication of this historian's thesis, the greater part of the points raised by her are no longer obscure; on the other hand, Gerstein still appears as a symbol — in fact he does so more and more.

C. Those Who Believe the Essential Points

Very rare are those authors who have not noticed the improbabilities and peculiarities sprinkled throughout the "confessions" of the former SS officer, but many are those who have ignored them, who couldn't bring themselves to reject this unexpected evidence, unique of its kind, because it originated from within the SS, and was offered spontaneously, with no possibility of a claim that any physical or moral torture had been used on its author.

What we, in our view, consider inexplicable is that an explanation for these improbabilities and discrepancies has been sought in recourse, for example, to the following arguments:

— Gerstein in his daily life apparently showed rather unusual behavior; those of his friends interrogated by Pierre Joffroy or Saul Friedländer have given many examples of it. So, in these circumstances, is it not natural that a "saint astray in his century" should bewilder ordinary people? One would thus find in his "confessions" the simple reflection of his strangeness.

— Gerstein would have been profoundly distressed by what he had seen at Belzec in August 1942; from that date onwards his physical and psychological health would, it seems, have rapidly deteriorated. In April–May 1945, he would have passed through a crisis of exaltation which Germany's final defeat could only have

exacerbated. In these circumstances, is it astounding that Gerstein has given incredible details and figures? But how, by contrast, can one explain the exactitude of his timing with the stopwatch, not to mention the precise number of blows administered with the horse-whip by such or such guard?

— That Gerstein did not have “as a predominant characteristic, precision in the matter of figures,” is the explanation supplied by Léon Poliakov and Pierre Vidal-Naquet (*Le Monde*, 8 March 1979, page 30). Paradoxically, these two authors remind us some lines further on that Gerstein was an engineer (see article and translation page 168).

Some of these writers who consider the documents of the former SS officer as “indisputable as to the essentials” do not seem to have had the slightest scruple in seriously altering what did not seem essential to them. The textual manipulations and fabrications of Léon Poliakov have been pointed out in the course of this thesis. Relying on Léon Poliakov, who is considered a specialist on the question, many authors have used his distorted texts. This is especially the case with Saul Friedländer and François Delpech.

In Germany, Robert Neumann on the one hand, and Heydecker and Leeb on the other, have similarly substituted for the unbelievable figures others that were less so. In our comparative tables, we have drawn attention to these fabrications, which are different from the ones of Léon Poliakov.

Often, writers—perhaps confused by the improbabilities or by the differences between reproductions—have been content to summarize more or less correctly one or another of the “confessions.” Among these, we mention, although the list is not complete: Raul Hilberg, Lucy S. Dawidowicz, Gideon Hausner, Gerald Reitlinger, John Toland, *etc.* All these authors, who often claim to be historians, have postulated that Gerstein’s accounts are true in the essentials; afterwards, they have suppressed their critical capacities, in the best of cases by toning down any fact which might weaken their belief.

We even witness, lately, the application of a novel and surprising method in the utilization of the “confessions.” We shall give two examples, taken from works published in 1982 and 1983.

1. François de Fontette — *Histoire de l’antisémitisme*.

On page 154, we drew attention to the publication in France, in the series “*Que sais-je?*” (What do I know?) of the *History of Anti-Semitism* (No. 2039) authored by François de Fontette, honorary Dean of the Faculty of Law and Economic Sciences of Orleans and at the present time Professor of the Faculty of Law at the University René Descartes (Paris-V). In his Chapter V, subchapter V, *The Extermination*, “*The Final Solution*,” subdivision 3, *The Ex-*

terminations Rationalized, François de Fontette has recourse to “only one witness, Kurt Gerstein, a Christian working in the SS precisely for the sole purpose of witnessing for the future...” (*op.cit.*, page 120).

Thus François de Fontette makes the same choice as the thirty-four historians who in February gave their approval to a declaration on the Hitler policy of extermination which was published in *Le Monde* (please refer to page 11 *et seq.*). He does not disclose his source, but it is easy to recognize in the text he partially reproduces the French translation of the German version of 4 May 1945 (T III) as it was given to us by Léon Poliakov and Josef Wulf in their book *Le IIIe Reich et les Juifs*. François de Fontette has recopied twenty-six-and-a-half lines of page 114 of this book.

This extract describes the procession of the deportees towards the death chambers. The author neglected to copy thirty-five lines, with their alleged description of the gassing operation itself.

François de Fontette at this point writes the following sentence: “And there is the result once the operation is finished.” There then follow seventeen lines from page 115 of Léon Poliakov and Josef Wulf’s book; these seventeen lines expose the treatment to which the corpses were subjected after gassing.

To be sure, in the two extracts copied by François de Fontette, which together make up forty-three-and-a-half lines, it is impossible to point to the smallest improbability; at most one notices some oddities. The improbabilities that we have pointed out particularly in our pages, 149, 150, and 151 are not to be seen here, as they are located in the thirty-five lines that have been avoided.

For our part, we do not believe that this severe amputation of Text III could be due only to chance or to limitations on space.

2. Eugen Kogon, Hermann Langbein, Adalbert Rückerl, *Nationalsozialistische Massentötungen durch Giftgas* (National-Socialist Mass Killing by Poison Gas).

In this book, published in Germany in 1983, Chapter VI was written by the Israeli Yitzhak Arad; a subchapter entitled “*Der Gerstein Bericht*” (The Gerstein Report) takes up pages 171 to 174 and includes extracts copied from the German version of 4 May 1945 (T III). The reproduction is preceded by four lines in which one notices a good three errors:

1. Gerstein was an Untersturmführer and not Obersturmführer in 1942.

2. He stayed at the Belzec camp on 18 and 19 August 1942 and caught a glimpse of the Treblinka camp on 20 August 1942; he was not there “in June 1942.”

3. The version he copies very partially is not the version of 26

May 1945 but of 4 May 1945.

We point out these mistakes on principle, but the essential lies elsewhere.

The text offered by Yitzhak Arad corresponds to that published, for example, by Léon Poliakov and Josef Wulf in their book *Das Dritte Reich und die Juden* (The Third Reich and the Jews).

The copy of the account begins with one-and-a-half lines which can be found on page 115 of the book just mentioned. This short excerpt is followed by an ellipsis which replace fifty-one lines of text.

The account begins again with four-and-a-half lines, after which we find more ellipses which cover the conjuring away of another fourteen lines of the original text.

The "confession" gets its second wind and reproduces eleven-and-a-half lines. The text then stops in the middle of a sentence, omitting the second half of the sentence. This second half of the sentence comprises one of the improbabilities pointed out in our summary, namely, the height of the pile of shoes estimated at 25 meters, that is, 7 or 8 stories: a pile at the top of which each deportee had to place his own pair of shoes.

Having sidestepped this obstacle, the author returns to the text for seven-and-a-half lines; this time, the ellipsis eliminates two words which are *ohne Prothesen*, meaning "without artificial limbs."

The ordeal continues and ends with twenty-two uninterrupted lines, and it is after this last passage of the account that Gerstein's description, properly so-called, of the gassing operation itself occurs, which is to say the heart of the matter, that the writers have ignored.

In this work, guaranteed by the three highest non-Revisionist authorities of West Germany and Austria (Kogon, Langbein, and Rückerl), the account which they persist in calling "*Der Gerstein-Bericht*" (The Gerstein Report) is carefully purged of every statement not susceptible of belief. Only in the first lines of the excerpt reproduced are there figures difficult to accept; these concern the train made up of 45 cars with 6,700 persons, of whom 1,450 were already dead on arrival, which works out to almost 149 persons per car, of whom more than thirty are dead!

We have examined in detail the method adopted in the one instance by François de Fontette and in the other by the three German or Austrian leading lights in this field. This method carries us down a slope yet more dangerous than those where the Gerstein texts previously went astray. This time, there are no longer any manipulations strictly speaking, and much less fabrication; one proceeds by means of large cuts, by amputations: by "pious cuts," we could say, as one says "pious lies."

Photocopy of extract from *Le Monde* of 8 March 1979, page 30.

Translation as follows:

Document mentioned on page 165

Concerning the Evidence of Kurt Gerstein

Readers of *Le Monde* were astonished to read, in the Kurt Gerstein report quoted in the "Declaration of the Historians" on the "Hitler Policy of Extermination" (*Le Monde*, 21 February), that in the Belzec gas chambers seven to eight hundred persons were crammed into an area of 25 square meters. Messrs. Léon Poliakov and Pierre Vidal-Naquet, signatories of the declaration, write the following clarification:

"We have written that the account of Kurt Gerstein, ardent Christian and member of the SS, who had, in performance of his duties, visited the extermination camps of Belzec and Treblinka in the month of August 1942, was 'indisputable as to the essentials.' This meant, in good French, that, as for the majority of human evidence, one could discuss certain details of it. It is clear in fact that in a room of 25 square meters one can hardly cram, taking into account the number of children, more than three hundred people. This signifies quite simply that Gerstein was mistaken either on the dimensions of the room or the number of victims. This mistake is easily explained: precision in the matter of figures was not Gerstein's predominant quality, and he had dramatically lived his visit to Belzec.

"What remains is precisely what is essential. Kurt Gerstein, SS lieutenant, chemical engineer, charged by the SS authorities with the problem of disinfection, was he or was he not present 20 August 1942, at the arrival of a train of Jewish deportees at Belzec and was he a witness to the extermination by carbon monoxide of these men, these women, and these children? The answer is: Yes, without the slightest doubt. In his report dated 26 April 1945, Kurt Gerstein pointed out that he had been accompanied by Professor Wilhelm Pfannenstiel of the University of Marburg. Now, the latter, in testifying on 6 June 1950 at Darmstadt, while disputing certain details of Gerstein's account concerning the figures put forward by him or the rôle and the remarks imputed to himself, declared no less than: 'After having cut the women's hair, the whole batch was led into a building of six chambers. To my knowledge, only four were utilized. The people were locked into the chambers where the exhaust gases of an engine were introduced. Gerstein stated that about eighteen minutes were necessary to reestablish calm inside these chambers. When the Jews were led in, the rooms were lighted by electricity and everything proceeded calmly. But, when the light went out, screams made themselves heard, then quieted down little by little.'⁴

A propos du témoignage sur Kurt Gerstein

Des lecteurs du Monde se sont étonnés de lire, dans le rapport de Kurt Gerstein cité dans la « déclaration d'historiens » sur la « politique hitlérienne d'extermination » (le Monde, 21 février), que dans la chambre à gaz de Belzec sept à huit cents personnes s'entassaient sur 25 mètres carrés. Signataires de la déclaration, MM. Léon Pollakov et Pierre Vidal-Naquet nous adressent la mise au point suivante :

Nous avons écrit que le récit de Kurt Gerstein, qui, chrétien ardent et membre de la SS, avait, pour le compte de celle-ci, visité les camps d'extermination de Belzec et de Treblinka au mois d'août 1942, était « indiscutable sur l'essentiel ». Cela voulait dire, en bon français, que, comme pour la grande majorité des témoignages humains, on pouvait en discuter certains détails. Il est clair, en effet, que, dans une pièce de 25 mètres carrés, on ne peut guère entasser, en tenant compte du nombre des enfants, plus de trois cents personnes. Cela signifie tout simplement que Gerstein s'est trompé soit sur les dimensions de la pièce, soit sur le nombre des victimes. Cette erreur s'explique aisément : la précision en matière de chiffres n'était pas la qualité prédominante de Gerstein, et il avait vécu dramatiquement sa visite à Belzec.

Reste ce qui est précisément l'essentiel. Kurt Gerstein, lieutenant SS, ingénieur chimiste chargé par les autorités SS des problèmes de la désinfection, a-t-il, oui ou non, assisté, le 20 août 1942, à l'arrivée d'un train de déportés juifs à Belzec et a-t-il été le témoin de l'extermination à l'oxyde de carbone de ces hommes, de ces femmes et de ces enfants ? La réponse est : oui, sans le moindre doute. Kurt Gerstein, dans son rapport rédigé le 26 avril 1945, avait signalé qu'il avait été accompagné par le professeur Wilhelm Pfannenstiel, de l'université de Marbourg. Or celui-ci, déposant à Darmstadt

le 6 juin 1950, tout en contestant certains détails du récit de Gerstein, qu'il s'agisse des chiffres avancés par celui-ci ou du rôle et des propos qui lui étaient prêtés, n'en déclara pas moins : « Après avoir coupé les cheveux » aux femmes, on conduisit tout le chargement dans un bâtiment de six chambres. A ma connaissance, quatre seulement furent utilisées. On enferma ces hommes dans les chambres où furent introduits les gaz d'échappement d'un moteur. Gerstein constata qu'il fallait environ dix-huit minutes pour que le calme fût rétabli à l'intérieur de celles-ci. Lorsqu'on y conduisit les juifs, elles étaient éclairées à l'électricité et tout se déroula dans le calme. Mais, lorsque la lumière s'éteignit, des hurlements se firent entendre, puis s'apaisèrent peu à peu (1).

Par ailleurs, Gerstein, immédiatement après sa visite à Belzec et à Treblinka, s'était confié à un diplomate suédois, le baron von Otter, qui fit rapport à son gouvernement. Que celui-ci ait attendu le 7 août 1945 pour communiquer le récit de Gerstein aux alliés (2) met en cause le courage de ce gouvernement neutre, non la véracité du récit de Gerstein. Il serait possible de donner d'autres détails, mais on s'en voudrait d'insister.

(1) Saul Friedländer, *Kurt Gerstein ou l'ambiguïté du bien*, Paris, Castelman, 1967, page 111.

(2) L. Pollakov et J. Wulf, *Le III^e Reich et les juifs*, Paris, Galilée, 1959, pp. 122-124.

“In addition, Gerstein, immediately after his visit to Belzec and Treblinka, confided in a Swedish diplomat, Baron von Otter, who reported to his government. That this latter should have waited till 7 August 1945 to communicate Gerstein’s account to the Allies⁵ brings into question the courage of this neutral government, not the veracity of Gerstein’s account. It would be possible to give other details, but one would not wish to insist.”

—*Le Monde*, edition of 8 March 1979, page 30

Footnotes to Chapter Four

1. Among these journalists, one can name:

—Geo Kelber, writer of an article published in *France-Soir*, 4 July 1945.

—Madeleine Jacob, who in January 1946 submitted to the Assistant Prosecutor-General of the Grand Tribunal of Nürnberg, the Frenchman Charles Dubost, photographs of the documents which constituted PS-1553 (Pierre Joffroy, *op. cit.* page 266).

2. The “Faurisson Affair” exploded in November 1978 when Robert Faurisson, a professor of literature and specialist in texts and documents teaching at the University of Lyon II, made it known, principally in the newspaper *Le Monde*, that after years of research he had arrived at the conclusion that homicidal gas chambers had never existed in any concentration camp.

His statement gave rise to a tempest of indignation, his most virulent adversary being Pierre Vidal-Naquet, professor of ancient Greek history at the School of Advanced Practical Studies in Paris.

Pierre Vidal-Naquet was one of the two originators of the Declaration of the Historians. While not a partisan of Zionism, he has always shown great interest in racial matters and has published many anti-Revisionist articles in newspapers and magazines.

At a symposium held at the Sorbonne in July 1982 on the subject of *Nazi Germany and the Genocide of the Jews*, to which Revisionist historians were not admitted, Pierre Vidal-Naquet took upon himself the responsibility of explaining the views of the Revisionists.

Robert Faurisson refuted his reported arguments in a book *Réponse à Pierre Vidal-Naquet* (Reply to Pierre Vidal-Naquet).

Professor Faurisson became the defendant in legal proceedings initiated by LICRA (*Ligue Internationale contre le Racisme et l'Antisémitisme*/International League against Racism and Anti-Semitism and MRAP (*Mouvement contre le Racisme et pour la Paix*/Movement against Racism and for Peace). These associations, also acting on behalf of others of a similar character, accused him of falsifying history.

The French court refused to recognize the principal accusation. He was convicted only for “injury to others,” which means injury to those who claim to have suffered from the exterminations, *i.e.*, principally the Jewish community.

In its judgment of 26 April 1983, the Court of Appeal of Paris stated that in view of their seriousness, “the validity of the conclusions defended by Prof. Faurisson are thus in the domain solely of experts, historians, and the public.” That is to say, there was no legal case to answer.

3. The posthumous legend has taken firm root over the years. Imagine our surprise on reading an article in *Le Monde* (23/24 January 1983) signed by Jacques Nobécourt and titled: “Berlin, 30 January 1933 “L’apocalypse en gibus” (Apocalypse in an opera hat); we have selected the following passage from it: “The mass of the Germans closed ranks [behind Hitler]. It is a fact. The rest of Europe understood nothing of what has happened. That is another fact. But if the masses as a whole have been brought to heel, it is against one individual (Hitler) that a stand has been taken by other individuals one by one (Willy Brandt, Kurt Schumacher, Klaus von Stauffenberg, Hans and Sophie School, Kurt Gerstein. —Two socialists, one officer, two students, an SS officer). Alone they have chosen their fight, and, for some, their death.”
4. Saul Friedländer, *Kurt Gerstein ou l’ambiguïté du bien*. Paris, Casterman, 1967, page 111.
5. L. Poliakov and J. Wulf, *Le III. Reich et les juifs*. Paris, Gallimard, 1959, pp. 122-124.

Conclusion

In summary, what can be the contribution of this present thesis to our knowledge, if not of Gerstein, at least of the Gerstein “confessions”?

We find our work to be the first in-depth study made until now of the texts which historians and experts, for more than thirty years, have been quoting in support of certain arguments on the subject of the deportation. To accomplish something new in this field constituted a difficult task in certain aspects, but easy in others.

— *Difficult*, because it was necessary to assemble material of which we knew neither the quantity nor the origin; some had been found in Germany at the L.K.A. of Bielefeld/Westphalia, some in the United States at the National Archives in Washington, and yet some in Paris, in the files of the French Military Justice Department.

— *Easy*, because, advancing into virgin territory, we gathered a generous crop of unpublished documents.

The balance sheet of our work and research could, it seems to us, be described in this matter:

1. *Discovery of a sixth version of the “confessions”*

To the five versions of which certain authors had declared they had knowledge we have been able to add a sixth: handwritten, dated 6 May 1945, composed in French in Gerstein’s own hand (T IV), and so short that it does not describe any gassing. To this sixth version are joined some supplements; the whole of this material, comprising the principal “confession” and the supplementary material, has never been published nor even pointed out by any other author.

2. *The restoration of the original text of each “confession” (including its supplements)*

The exact texts of the six versions have now been established by us, as well as the texts of their supplements.

3. *Examination of the origin and the degree of authenticity of each text*

The origin and the authenticity of each of the texts have been studied. For some of them, we have expressed certainty; for the others, we have put forward hypotheses which seem to us solidly based. We presented a file on the origin and authenticity of these texts to the historian Alain Decaux who, in March 1983, devoted a TV broadcast to Gerstein “*Espion de Dieu*” (God’s Spy). In his book *Histoire en Question—2* (History in Question—2), Alain Decaux has expressed the view that our demonstration was convincing (*op.cit.*, page 309–310).

4. *Examination of the veracity of all the texts, with a statement of their improbabilities and discrepancies*

A statement of the improbabilities and discrepancies has been drawn up in our chapter "Veracity of the Texts." Although it is certainly not complete, it appears to us that it even now suffices to raise a question as to the seriousness of a document which has always been presented to us as having an authentic historic value. In addition, the comparisons between one version of the texts and the other have brought to light, in our comparative tables, not just differences, but inexplicable contradictions.

5. Thanks to a study of a file—rediscovered—of the French Military Justice Department, the clarification of some obscure points

Consultation of the Gerstein file at the Direction of Military Justice has permitted us to elucidate some obscure points and to bring new facts to light on the disquieting disappearance of the papers found in the former SS officer's cell after his death. We have been the first to find and make use of a file which the French Military Justice Department rediscovered, on 5 August 1971, more than twenty-five years after its loss.

So much, one can say, for the assets side of the balance sheet. But there is also the liabilities side. One would have thought that by dint of assembling these documents and analyzing them, by dint of reading so many "confessions," the personality of Gerstein might appear to us less enigmatic. Such is not the case. After this study of the texts, one would have to undertake further research, mainly biographical and historical, and particularly the study of the evidence. We have not dealt with the evidence gathered after the war from people who, in the period from the month of August 1942 to April 1945, received the confession of the Obersturmführer.¹

Our thesis did not have for its principal object the personality of Kurt Gerstein. It was aimed at the narratives of which Gerstein is the author or which are attributed to him. What attitude can one adopt toward these accounts, not at a first reading but after an attentive study?

The most indulgent will be inclined to believe that Gerstein was present at some painful scenes, that he saw arrive the convoys of deportees, a certain number of whom were dead or dying; that he saw the unfortunates undress completely on the orders of Ukrainian auxiliaries; that he saw the hair-cutting of the women; that he heard the lamentations of the wretched people, anxious about the fate awaiting them when they were pushed towards the rooms for showers or disinfection. These are the preliminaries of the account. The essential part concerns the gassing operations and subsequent events. This essential part not even the most indulgent of readers could accept without difficulty, so much of it is abounding with impossibilities as to the physical world. He will believe that Gerstein had

been psychologically shocked; in Gerstein's place, who would not have been? Moreover, the physical and mental equilibrium of the SS officer was very precarious. His diabetic condition sometimes provoked in Gerstein "pre-comatose conditions" which would explain his lapses of absent-mindedness and some of his strange reactions (*Kurt Gerstein ou l'ambiguïté du bien*/Kurt Gerstein or the Ambiguity of Good, page 152: letter of 30 September 1957 from Dr. Nissen to Gerstein's widow).

The most severe will consider that the preliminaries of his narrative are already flawed with improbabilities when Gerstein tells of the excesses committed against civilians, which are unfortunately common in many wars. But when Gerstein, who was a technologist, then comes to describe the essential thing, which is to say that extraordinary invention in the science of crime, the gas chambers intended for killing masses of human beings, the physical impossibilities that he enumerates and repeats without realizing what he is stating end up destroying all evidential value in his "confession."

Among attentive readers, the most indulgent as well as the most severe would not in any case be able to affirm that the "Gerstein document" is of a quality and reliability such as could reasonably constitute the fundamental proof of the existence of homicidal gas chambers in certain camps in occupied Poland.

And yet, his accounts have been accepted. They have been widely used for the last thirty years. It even seems to us that they are being utilized more and more. Is it because these "confessions" were written of his own accord by an officer of the SS that they have become a cornerstone, perhaps the very keystone of the intellectual edifice tending to prove the existence of the homicidal gas chambers? We notice that they are referred to as though they were "Holy Writ." To accept this evaluation, we need assurance that the non-Revisionist writers have first assured themselves of the reliability of the texts. Have they taken this elementary precaution? Our study leads us to reply unhesitatingly in the negative.

Our preceding chapter has been devoted to the reactions of the differing categories of readers to the "confessions" of Gerstein. Now, at the end of this present study, we believe that the differences between the reactions arise, in part, from the fact that these readers have not all read the same text. Probably a great many only know of the existence of one text, not always the same one. Some have known successively of several texts but if they have noticed the variations, not to say contradictions, they have always minimized them, and sometimes even suppressed them.

The obligation to establish a text before writing about it does not seem evident to everybody.

When beginning our work, we had envisaged presenting the narratives of Gerstein in accordance with the traditional method for classical texts in the collection of "*Belles Lettres*" (Fine Writings) commonly known as the "*Collection Budé*."¹ This method is to select a text of reference, which occupies the greater part of the printed page, and to point out at the bottom of the page, in the space reserved for criticism, the different variations of the text. We had to renounce this intention, because the method is inapplicable to Gerstein's "confessions"; and this impossibility gives, of itself, cause to reflect on the nature of these "confessions."

If we had adopted this traditional method of presenting the texts, perhaps we should have chosen as text of reference the document which we name T II, PS-1553; we should have explained our choice by reasons we have given on page 145, but these reasons would perhaps have been debatable. In fact, if PS-1553 is the version best known in France, thanks to Léon Poliakov, Saul Friedländer, and Pierre Joffroy, it is not so in Germany where, among other writers, Hans Rothfels and Helmut Franz have agreed on their preference for the German version of 4 May which we call T III. As T II and T III are very different from each other, we should have been obliged to point out these differences between the two texts and to add the variants supplied by all the other texts.

Let us suppose all the same that by a simple arbitrary choice we had selected T II as the sole text of reference. In this case, because of the profusion of variants, the critique would have occupied a disproportionate amount of space in relation to the text. One line only of T II would perhaps have demanded a whole page of variants. The reader would have lost himself in the abundance of notes. It would not have been possible, at least without very considerable work, to put together again the complete version of such or such "confession."

It is for this reason we have felt that we had to adopt the following solution:

- a typewritten transcription of the complete text;
- comparative tables of the principal differences, completed by a column of observations.

In 1911, in his *Manual de critique verbale* (Handbook of Verbal Criticism) Louis Havet created the expression "the pathology of texts." Texts are like living bodies subject to illnesses. The illnesses of texts are their distortions across the ages. We must try to give the texts back their original form. Louis Havet shows that most of the distortions or malformations are due to time and the number of scliasts,² but that others can be due to the mentality or ideology of those who reproduce them.

It is in this way that the Christian scoliasts have involuntarily or sometimes voluntarily Christianized Latin texts.

Many texts have suffered transformations, throughout all periods of history. One might have thought that in our epoch, when the technical means of information and communication are considerable, texts would be protected from the misadventures of the past. The example of Gerstein's "confessions" shows that such is not the case. One even notices, in this instance, an extraordinary proliferation of manipulations and fabrications, considering that these have been made in a very short period of time (1945–1983).

The generally improper utilization of the "confessions" of the Obersturmführer must encourage us to an extreme vigilance, above all when it relates to texts which, by reason of their content, are likely to be distorted or appealed to for motives having nothing to do with science.

The Fertile Spirit of Doubt

A skeptic was needed, that is to say a person who examines, who doubts and reserves his judgment, to study in detail and at length and with caution these narrations, which have stirred up too much passion since their successive and divergent publications. Our ambition has been to be that skeptic.

Proceeding in accord with the methods universally applicable to the appraisal of texts, we have wished to offer historians a solid base from which they will be able to form their opinions. From now on, each historian will be able to choose his text of the "confessions" with full knowledge of the case, and he will have the obligation, with respect to his reader, to specify clearly which one is his choice; in this way too, we shall dispel some unfortunate misunderstandings.

We hope that one day it will be possible to answer satisfactorily the multiplicity of questions raised by the Gerstein "confessions." No one has yet succeeded in giving those answers, which in any case have been impossible to obtain as long as no one had first cared about learning what Gerstein had truly said and written.

Montaigne³ can be taken as a model by skeptics. We have read again, in the third book of his *Essays*, chapter 11 titled "Of Cripples." The essayist remarks that in response to a fact reported to them, many people ask themselves: "How does it happen?" But Montaigne, in his view, considers that before posing oneself such a question, it would often be more appropriate to formulate at the start an elementary question: "But...does it happen?"

We have endeavored to show, against this background, what happened and we leave to others the task of discovering "how it

could happen.”

The establishment of the texts attributed to Gerstein was absolutely essential, but their attentive and prudent reading is no less so.

As we were discovering incoherencies, improbabilities, and inconsistencies in these narratives, a sentence of Léon Poliakov himself impressed itself on us. In his afterword to Saul Friedländer’s book, Poliakov writes: “Psychiatrists would have plenty of things to tell us about the Kurt Gerstein case.” (K.G., page 200)

The texts of Gerstein have generally been read in haste, without questioning their veracity “as to the essentials.” Paul Rassinier was the first to demand a special vigilance at every moment of reading them. It is by adopting Paul Rassinier as a model that we have allowed ourselves to go beyond the simple establishment of the texts, by questioning their authenticity and their veracity.

Raymond Aron, in one of his last works (*Le Spectateur engagé/ The Involved Spectator*, page 332) reports a long discussion with two journalists, and concludes: “I have not convinced them, but I have made them breathe in the fertile spirit of doubt.”

The Gerstein “confessions” have supplied support to the growth of various beliefs. In our opinion, we consider that this support is not worthy of confidence.

Now, the “confessions” of the SS officer have to be reread without forgetting for a single moment what Raymond Aron called “the fertile spirit of doubt.”

Footnotes to Conclusion

1. Guillaume Budé (1467–1540,) French Renaissance humanist. He spread the knowledge of ancient Greek and instigated the foundation of the College of France.
2. Commentators and interpreters of the ancient Latin, Greek *etc.* texts.
3. Michel Yquem de Montaigne (1533–1592), perhaps more than any other Renaissance writer, embodies the French traditions of rational skepticism, common sense, and tolerance.

Afterword

The Gerstein Story: Questions and Comments

BY RONALD V. PERCIVAL

The thesis was concerned only with a critical appreciation of the texts of Gerstein's "confessions"; it was not concerned with his personality or history, and many interesting questions remain.

The three biographies of Gerstein (please see pages 6 and 7) and Hochhuth's play were propaganda tracts rather than historical studies and are more misleading than helpful.

If Gerstein survives as a character of historic interest, it will not be for his exposure of Nazi atrocities, because his evidence is worthless. He would survive because of the amazing tissue of lies he wove and because he duped so many for such a length of time.

One would hope that one day an authentic historian, instead of a propagandist, might decide to get at the truth about Gerstein. He was mentally unbalanced, to be sure, but was he quite mad? Was he also a racketeer?

The notes below are not a critique, but suggest some starting points for such an inquiry.

Gerstein the Confessor

Apart from the four texts which are known to have originated from Gerstein, copies, drafts, and fragments of others have come to light. All these were apparently written between 26 April and 6 May 1945. Then the French seem to have stopped him when they found he had given a copy, with notes, to the Anglo-American investigators. He must have spent all his days writing and typing.

Why so many?

While on parole at Rottweil he was free to walk about. He had some German money. He wrote only once to his wife, on the day of his departure. Although he could have given her a return address (via the Red Cross and other POW organizations), he did not do so. On the contrary, he makes a point of telling her that he does not know where he is going. Furthermore, he does not even mail the letter.

That one unposted letter is the sum total of his contacts with his own world, once he had deserted.

It seems very clear that he wished to stay untraceable.

But might he have written to his protecting friend Holländer, with

whom he seems to have been in some sort of complicity?

When Gerstein deserted, the war was almost over. The French had no need of prisoners and would certainly have turned him back had he not interested them by his “confessions,” which supposedly implicated war criminals.

Gerstein would have known this, of course. Is this why he invented the “confessions”? So that he could stay hidden and untraceable and not be returned to Germany?

The key improbabilities of his evidence are already pointed out in the thesis, but a further list could be continued indefinitely. For example:

- How would the 1,450 dead-on-arrival have been disposed of? Several trucks with workers would have been necessary to take them away.

- How could the little girl have had a coral necklace if all the victims had stripped naked and turned in all valuables?

But a much more significant example is:

- Why would the SS *store* the bodies of prisoners who had died of typhus? This is an amazing notion.

It is incredible that the SS would store typhous corpses and even more incredible that anyone with a pretense to a knowledge of hygiene would report that they did.

To prevent further infection, the best solution with a typhous corpse is to burn it immediately—hence the crematoria and the smokestacks. Failing that, the next best solution is to bury it as deeply as possible so that none of the bacteria, etc. in the body will contaminate the local water supply.

Although Gerstein reports this incident as hearsay, it is not only obviously false in itself, but disproves all his other claims of being an expert at disinfection, of having had medical training, and so on.

Evidently, he had no knowledge of the first rules of hygiene.

Gerstein the Student

20 years old when he passed the *Abitur* (final high-school examination). Perhaps later than average, but then he had changed schools quite frequently.

26 years old when he qualified as a junior mining engineer. Surely rather late?

As he does not mention otherwise, he must have worked above ground, an interpretation which is supported by other evidence. He probably worked at a desk/materials-procurement job for machinery, since this seems to have been his specialty, if he had one. He claims no expert knowledge of geology, which is an essential study for a

fully qualified mining engineer.

31 years old (interrogation of 26.6.45 by Commandant Beckhardt), he began the study of tropical medicine at Tübingen. Another bizarre assertion which seems patently false:

- Since the loss of her tropical colonies after the First World War, Germany had very little interest in tropical medicine: thus, there were no career opportunities.

- Would a small university like Tübingen have offered a course in tropical medicine?

- Even if there were opportunities to study, Gerstein would definitely not have been permitted to study tropical medicine (a romantic and glamorous profession at the time) unless he had first qualified in general medicine.

- His “confessions” show that Gerstein had no knowledge of medicine whatsoever.

Although this statement is obviously self-aggrandizing nonsense, a question remains: he could not have been studying medicine, tropical or otherwise; what then was he doing at that time, if anything?

Gerstein the Activist

In 1925, his joining a religious youth group had no special significance of its own. The social mores in Germany were much more conformist than they are today and nearly all middle-class youths belonged to one such group or another. These groups also served as social clubs where the young could meet each other. Gerstein's later wife was the daughter of a parson.

His religious convictions, around which he created such a fable in his “confessions,” did not stop him from joining the Nazi party, the SA and the Waffen SS. A political/military career is an unlikely route for a devout believer.

Looking at the dates, one could assume that he joined the Nazi party in 1933 to jump on the bandwagon of Hitler's accession to power, though we should also remember that many ardent Christians of all sects were at the same time ardent Nazis.

In 1935-36, we see the first signs of eccentricity/mental aberration.

Germans happen to enjoy their old folktales (Wagner's operas are probably the best-known examples). *Wittekind* is no more “pagan” than, say, Shakespeare's *King Lear*. If this was a gala performance and the audience was there to have a pleasant evening out, no wonder that Gerstein's interruptions were resented. What could be more natural? He chose a good occasion to make himself and his cause, whatever it was, distinctly unpopular.

The escapade of the miners' excursion (which, if Gerstein organized it, further indicates that he worked in the office) can perhaps be attributed to a warped sense of humor. But the seditious material found in his rooms on that occasion is more significant because he was still a stormtrooper. Was he a schizophrenic? Or just looking for trouble?

Then, to cap it all, he seems to have been involved in some sort of plot to restore the Kaiser. The frenetic irrationality of this scheme could be compared to an American trying to restore King George III c. 1800. Nothing came of the plot because nothing could come of it. Still, one is forced to the view that he was losing contact with reality.

All in all, Gerstein seems to have been an out-and-out nuisance, and one is surprised by the tolerance shown by the German authorities. Or was he well-known as a relatively harmless fantasist? One suspects that if indeed two junior Gestapo officers recommended him to the army, they were doing themselves some good by getting a scallawag out of town and letting the army straighten him out.

Gerstein the Soldier

Germany had already been at war for one and a half years when he joined up. His father, for one, thought that Gerstein was malingering; but equally likely Gerstein, in light of his patchy record to date, could have been nervous about presenting himself to the authorities once more.

Nearly 36 years old, he joins the Waffen SS: too old and too temperamentally unreliable for first-line combat and, by the same token, unsuitable for extended and costly officer-training.

In his "confession," Gerstein makes great theater out of his joining the Waffen SS, which had, in fact, recently been formed for the attack on Russia and for which recruits were urgently needed.

The Waffen SS quickly became a first-class combat army, no doubt; even though, with rear-echelon officers such as Gerstein, one can but marvel. But it was joined only by organizational ties to the General SS, at that time considered the *corps d'élite* of the Nazi state.

Gerstein, of course, exploits this confusion to his own profit, by letting it be believed he was at the very center of the system. And to support this deception, he loves quoting names and titles (some of which he cannot even spell) right up to the level of the Führer himself.

The facts show, however, that Gerstein was hardly on the periphery, let alone at the center of the system. As a junior officer with a dubious past and an uncertain future, he was given one of the lowliest and most humiliating tasks: sanitary/disinfection. The word

for this in the British army, for example, even in these more relaxed times, is not printable. Let us merely say that the pathway to the General Staff is not via the debugging unit, and leave it at that.

He was ordered about by younger but more senior officers, which must have hurt his conception of himself as an outstanding individualist. Except for his routine promotion to *Obersturmführer* (one could not stay in the rank of *Untersturmführer*; one was either returned to the ranks or dismissed if not promoted), he never merited further promotion throughout his four-year army career, even though, latterly, replacement officers were desperately needed for the combat formations. Like a dud soldier in any army, more menace than use, he was kept in the rear.

So far as we know, he worked at a petty desk job in Berlin processing the orders for a pesticide. Even so, this is the most significant period of his life: the period in which his “confessions” are based; the period when he says he went to Belzec, when he heard about typhous corpses stacked like link sausages in a supermarket, when he was putting up a grand show of anti-Nazi resistance by listening to the BBC and accosting Swedish diplomats in railway trains; and, as we shall show, when he was working some sort of private racket with Zyklon B.

But this is the period which, in truth, we know nothing about.

Gerstein the Expert — Prussic Acid

Confusingly, Gerstein calls prussic acid (hydrogen cyanide — HCN) by different names, such as “cyanide,” “hydro-cyanide,” “the poison,” etc.

It is used at various strengths in industry and medicine (not surprisingly, highly diluted, it is a very efficient tranquilizer) and the strength is carefully designated, i. e. 1%, 8%, 0.002%, or whatever. We have to assume, because we have no other choice, that as Gerstein was writing about prussic acid to kill people and did not designate any strength less than full-strength, then he must have meant full-strength prussic acid whenever he refers to this poison in his “confessions.”

It is extremely expensive and extremely dangerous to produce.

It is extremely expensive and extremely dangerous to transport, handle, and deliver.

As we have to evaluate prussic acid as a cost-effective killing agent, these two facts have to be borne in mind when we compare it with other methods, such as an ordinary mass-produced rifle-bullet.

Some of its characteristics are:

- It is colorless, like water. For safety reasons, most manufacturers

add a dye, traditionally the “prussian blue.”

- So far as we know, it has a sweetish smell. Because this odor is practically unnoticeable, manufacturers add a gas: either a tear gas or a nauseous gas.

- It boils at 26°C. Human body heat is about 37.5°.

- Its freezing point is -15°C.

- It is soluble in water and other liquids.

- When exposed to the air at temperatures above -15°C, it evaporates very rapidly (like high octane fuel) at a rate accelerating *pro rata* with the temperature. The fumes are of course fatal to any kind of life except bacteria.

- A dose of 0.05 gram is immediately fatal.

- A dose of 0.01 gram will kill a normal adult within one hour.

- Depending on the concentration or duration of exposure, a residue can stick to surfaces for some time. This is why, after an operation with Zyklon B, lengthy ventilation is necessary.

- Prussic acid can be absorbed through the skin, even as a gas. Hence, gas-masks and protective clothing have only a limited utility.

- If more than 75 grams are stored per cubic meter, it will explode. This explosive characteristic accounts for the superior efficiency of the Zyklon B pesticide (see below).

- Interestingly, it dissolves gold and is therefore used in the goldmining industry. Gerstein had studied mining. Is this how he first heard of it?

- In America, it is still used to execute criminals. The technique of the operation is extremely complicated: a study of this technique must surely convince anyone how utterly impractical prussic acid is as a quick, economical killing-agent for mass exterminations.

In Gerstein’s time, there was an aura of mystery and horror about prussic acid, which still persists. To some extent, it is still an “unknowable” chemical, for the good and simple reason that experimentation with it is so difficult, expensive, and dangerous.

Gerstein’s practical know-how, his grasp of the simplest arithmetic, was almost nil. The thought of his handling a truly sophisticated and hazardous chemical such as prussic acid is simply ludicrous.

The safest method of transporting prussic acid is to freeze it and keep it frozen; but the special fridges, containers, and so forth would have been very difficult and costly in war-time Germany.

Significantly, not once does he tell us what sort of container the prussic acid was packed in that he carried from Kollin to Belzec. The reason for this omission is probably simple: he had never had actual experience of transporting prussic acid, nor had he ever witnessed it being transported.

Later, under pressure from Mattéi, he stated “steel bottles,” which

confirmed his lie that he had transported prussic acid: it cannot be transported in steel bottles.

Gerstein quotes only two reports, which are hearsay reports, of killings by prussic acid: the Jews at Maria-Theresienstadt and the children at Auschwitz. Both reports are wildly unfeasible.

- The 100/260 kilos (to fill the capacity of the lorry) he was supposed to have picked up at Kollin would have been sufficient to provide instant death for 2 to 5.2 million persons, *i.e.*, the equivalent of several atomic bombs.

If the Germans were prepared to produce such vast quantities and use them so recklessly (lobbing opened cans from the battlements into a castle moat) why did they bother to invade Russia with an army? Surely, a few well-placed prussic acid gas-attacks would have been infinitely more cost effective?

Meantime, what were the views of the solemn Dr. Pfannenstiel, a doctor of medicine, about trundling such a cargo over the potholed roads of Poland? In war time?

- The quantity of 8,500 kilos he mentions as Gunther's stock would have been sufficient to kill 170 (not 8) million people; which, if let loose in Berlin, could well have put paid to the history of Europe and Gerstein forever.

- If we take Gerstein's own calculation of approximately one gram per person, then the acid may have been diluted to about 5% strength, in which case, it would not have been effective in rooms such as clubs and lecture-halls, which have very large air-spaces and, presumably, reasonably good ventilation; for as the fumes arose, they would have been diluted into infinitesimal proportions by the air.

The fact of the matter seems to be that Gerstein knew nothing about prussic acid as such, other than what he might have picked up from the melodramatic Hollywood gangster films that were so popular in Germany before the war.

Gerstein the expert — Zyklon B

Thanks principally to the propagandist historians, Zyklon B has worked its way into the realm of mythology; and we need to make an intense and careful effort to treat the subject rationally.

The Degesch firm had held the patent for Zyklon B since 1922. This patent does not cover prussic acid, which had been developed in the previous century. It covers a process whereby the gas from a very small quantity of prussic acid is released over a period of hours, instead of instantaneously, in order to kill vermin. In Britain, this general process was known as fumigation.

Undoubtedly there has been much confusion about Zyklon B. The

principle reason for this is that when Gerstein attached the Degesch invoices to the best-known of his "confessions," he let it be understood by implication that the Zyklon B on those invoices was one and the same thing as the mass-killing poison he had referred to in his "confession."

A further reason is that Zyklon B was almost invariably referred to, verbally and in writing, as "prussic acid"; just as one says or writes "aspirin," whereas the pure chemical is only a small percentage of the whole.

Another reason has been that during the witch-hunts after the war (and which still continue), when, thanks to Gerstein, Zyklon B had earned an unholy glory, no sane German would admit he had any knowledge of Zyklon B, because to do so was tantamount to a confession of murder.

Thus, this ridiculous myth has been allowed to grow.

It is significant that throughout his "confessions," Gerstein never once mentions Zyklon B itself by name; he never specifically identifies Zyklon B as a killing-agent for mass exterminations.

Zyklon B was also manufactured in France, Britain, and the U. S. A. Was he fearful that if he drew too much attention to the Degesch invoices, the investigators might discover what the product actually was and thus expose his deceit?

As a matter of fact, he gave the Degesch invoices to the Anglo-American investigators who, as events proved, did not understand them properly. But he withheld them from the French, to whom he had deserted, who had first right to all his evidence, and who, moreover, had been treating him very decently.

But the French, being neighbors, know Germany much better than do Americans or British. The French include Alsatians, who read and speak fluent German.

In other words, Gerstein wanted to prove that he was buying "prussic acid" under the name Zyklon B, and diverting this lethal prussic acid for disinfection (which is what Zyklon B was intended for). So he gave this "evidence" to the parties least likely to be suspicious, the Anglo-Americans. And, incidentally, from that point onward, the maniac legend of Zyklon B took flight.

Zyklon B had been a standard-issue pesticide in the German army since 1917. At that stage of the first world war, both sides were using poison gas, principally $\beta\beta$ -dichloroethylsulphide, which is better known as mustard gas; but neither that nor any of the other gases were based on prussic acid.

German technology on the uses of prussic acid was in fact more

advanced than that of the Allies, but both sides had undertaken tremendous research in poison gases for mass extermination on the battlefield.

It is very strange that the Germans, who already had Zyklon B — which is a sophisticated use of prussic acid — on their books, could not invent an effective poison gas based on prussic acid, practicable for mass killings, if such had been possible. No doubt they researched it, and found it impossible.

The manual published in Berlin (a similar one was published in Prague) is of particular interest because the foreword mentions Gerstein by name. Gerstein was never loath to hand himself a bouquet, and there must be some significance in the fact that in his “confessions” Gerstein does not mention his star role in this production. We can be sure that his omission was not due to forgetfulness. Could it be that if he had brought this manual to the attention of the investigators, they would quickly have spotted that Zyklon B was of no practical use for killing people, especially the wholesale murder of hundreds of people at a time?

The SS Colonel, Professor J. Mrugowsky, who was Gerstein’s commanding officer at the Hygiene institute in Berlin, was executed after the war for allegedly having conducted medical experiments on criminals who had been condemned to death. It will be noted that he edited the Berlin manual.

Gerstein surely knew Mrugowsky: they worked in the same building and must have met frequently, if not at work then in the dining room. Gerstein must have reported to him on the subject of the manual.

Gerstein does not hesitate to implicate a full general (Globocnik) whose name he cannot spell properly and Eichmann (whose name he cannot spell either) although he evidently met Globocnik only once, in Poland, and Eichmann, who was in Vienna, possibly not at all.

The question of “war crimes” trials, which become more squalid and repugnant as the years go by, does not concern us. That aside, Mrugowsky was a senior officer — by all accounts — a brilliant doctor. Why does not Gerstein, who evidently loved name-dropping for its own sake, mention him? His own commanding officer? Can it be that if he had mentioned Mrugowsky the manual would have come to light, and that manual, in addition to Mrugowsky’s own evidence on Zyklon B, would have exposed Gerstein’s lies?

The documents show that Zyklon B was a mixture of 98% prussic acid and 2% stabilizer/tear-gas. This mixture was held in a “porous mass” (it was actually a wood/vegetable fiber) in the form of a white

disc.

What the manuals do not make clear (but they are, after all, operating manuals and not laboratory formulas) is:

- What was the stabilizer which obviously allowed the prussic acid to disperse gradually over a period of hours and thus reach every nook and cranny of the room rather than evaporate almost immediately, as would pure untreated prussic acid?

- What were the proportions of prussic acid, tear gas, and stabilizer in the porous mass? In other words, if we have a 500-gram tin of Zyklon B, how much of it is actually prussic acid?

The element of warning tear gas need not worry us: 1 part to 10 million parts of air will temporarily blind. Thus, if we are discussing quantities of tear gas that will merely warn but not incapacitate a person, we are arriving at infinitesimally miniscule figures, which in any case are irrelevant to the main process.

Although we do not have full details of the composition of the Zyklon B disc, we can arrive at an estimate by another route:

- Rats are commonly used in laboratory tests because their reactions are usually similar to those of human beings.

- It took six grams of the Zyklon B disc to kill all the rats in a cubic meter within four hours.

- Three average-sized men take up one cubic meter.

- We know that 0.01 of a gram of prussic acid will kill a man within one hour.

- We know that army manuals are highly concerned with wide safety margins, that is to say, the certain death of the rats and the maximum dispersal of dangerous fumes.

- So let us be somewhat generous, and, for the purposes of this simple exercise, ignore the difference in time and assume that all the rats really died within the hour.

- Thus, if 0.03 grams of prussic acid are necessary to kill three men but 6 grams of Zyklon B disc are necessary to achieve the same result, then the prussic acid actually dispersed under the control of the stabilizer from Zyklon B was 200 times weaker than pure prussic acid.

- If four hours really had been necessary to kill all the rats, then the emission from the disc would have been more prolonged and thus even weaker.

In other words, with the addition of a little *eau de cologne* (which would, of course, dilute it further still) we are arriving within reach of a medicated after-shave.

While prussic acid — even the gas — can be absorbed through the skin, the operator in the Berlin manual is not even wearing gloves.

However, as already mentioned, in the disinfection services of the

German army the brand name “Zyklon B” was rarely used in practice. “Cyclone,” as a name, did not convey much meaning. It could equally well have described a detergent. Thus, both verbally and in writing, either the words “prussic acid” or “cyanide” were used to describe Zyklon B. And why not? There was no other prussic acid or cyanide to confuse it with.

No doubt the disinfection services of the German army saved themselves time and trouble by calling Zyklon B by its predominant component, which everyone would recognize and pay attention to, but they have indisputably caused much confusion ever since.

It was this terminology that helped Gerstein to pass off his fraud with the DEGESCH invoices. On these is noted, as a warning and as the main component, *Blausäure*, which means blue (prussic) acid, and the mere name excites the imagination. It fit neatly into all the propaganda. No one checked what Zyklon B was or how it actually functioned.

Now, we have to await an enterprising holocaustomaniac to offer the suggestion that the true nature of Zyklon B, as we have summarized it, is convincing as far as it goes, but it does not go far enough. To be sure, there must have been two Zyklons: the one a pesticide and the other (in unlabelled tins?) which was a form of prussic acid used to kill hundreds of people at one time.

Anticipating this folly:

- No army allows in its stores two dissimilar products with the same name: in this case, a routine pesticide and a horridly poisonous gas. The risks are too high.

- The SS offers us a particular example of the reasons for this rule. Many SS men, and particularly the lower ranks and auxiliaries, were not even German nationals whose native language was German. They were Czech, Dutch, Belgian, Ukrainian, French, etc., etc., whose knowledge of German was rudimentary.

- How would a Dutch sergeant-storekeeper, with a Polish corporal-assistant and three Ukrainian privates (whose own language is written in Cyrillic) ever have sorted out one Zyklon product from another? For immediate delivery? In time of war? The idea is farcical.

- Of course, there were stock/inventory numbers to go by, in addition to the name of the article, but these numbers, for ordinary working purposes, exacerbate rather than solve a problem. They are merely for administrative controls.

How would a Romanian, who could hardly read and write in his own language, read off a ten-digit number in German that a Dutch sergeant could understand?

- And if the tin were not even labelled? And there were thousands of other tins in store whose labels had come unstuck because the British had bombed the barge on the Rhine, and it had been water-logged for three days?

- And if the unlabelled tins had got mixed with identical unlabelled tins of sauerkraut? What then?

If there was a killing gas which was meant to be kept secret, why should it be called Zyklon also, and thus cause confusion? Would it not have been more sensible to call it Product X? Except that Product X, if it was prussic acid, would have needed such careful labelling and storage that it could never be kept secret.

Or some Croatian corporal, or perhaps Hungarian, from simple curiosity, wondering what those technological Germans were up to, might open a tin to have a look.

And we also know prussic acid cannot be stored in cans.

We return full circle to the original question: If it could be shown that gas chambers existed, we might then be able to figure out how they worked; but since mass-extinction gas chambers did not exist, can we add one absurdity to another by trying to show how the impossible worked?

Gerstein the Expert — Gas Chambers

Apart from the alleged episode at Belzec, Gerstein, curiously enough, never does make explicitly clear what killing-agent was ultimately used for his massive exterminations. He writes constantly about prussic acid and leaves us with the impression, by implication, that prussic acid was used; but he does not say so clearly. This is an astonishing omission for a trained engineer who kept a file on the subject. He does not even state whether the inefficient Diesel engine at Belzec was ever switched over to prussic acid or some other system.

Some extermination theorists have suggested carbon monoxide, which is an emission from an ordinary motor engine. But the Germans were short of motor fuel; nor are there any records of unusual quantities of motor fuel having been delivered to the camps. Neither the motors nor the chambers have ever been found. There have never been eyewitnesses; and besides, the propagandists have always insisted that the killing agent was prussic acid.

Taking their lead from Gerstein, it was Zyklon B which attracted and held the attention of the propagandists. If prussic acid crystals could be thrown about like popcorn, what need for other evidence?

Two typical instances from propagandist historians will suffice:

- Raul Hilberg, whose athletic prowess in the struggle against

evidence has been mentioned in the foreword, states that Zyklon was prussic acid in pellet form, packed in cans, and that it was odorless. "One can after another" was emptied into the gas chamber through a lattice window by a masked SS man.¹

- Gerald Reitlinger writes that Zyklon B was a disinfectant gas arising from blue hydrocyanide crystals.²

Neither of them knew what Zyklon B was, and neither had bothered to check.

The question remains whether prussic acid crystals or pellets can be used in this way.

The answer in Hilberg's case is that his idea is pure schoolboy farce. Mask or no mask, the SS man would not have survived to get to the top of the ladder; and since the cans were opened before he started up, neither would any bystanders have survived.

Reitlinger has been more careful. He has avoided telling us how the crystals were delivered, and has not given us any description of the gas chamber. He simply seems to have borrowed the idea from the actual method used to execute criminals in the States, without mentioning the enormous cost and complexity of the American operation: a cost and a complexity quite beyond Germany's resources in time of war.

Prussic acid was first developed by a Berliner (hence its name) but many of its industrial uses were later developed by the French physicist, Guy-Lussac. Thus France has a strong tradition and much experience with prussic acid.

One of France's leading experts prepared for Henri Roques a statement on the subject, to be used in evidence if necessary. We cannot do better than reproduce it in full, except that, to avoid any undesired publicity, we have omitted the names of the French and German companies and the precise location of their factories.

Translation

Gérard Roubéix
51 Avenue de la Coquetterie
44000 Nantes
12 February 1987
Monsieur le Président
Monsieur les Juges
Of the Administrative Tribunal of Nantes.
Gentlemen,

The Roques Affair

Having completed most of my career as an engineer in the hydrocyanic acid industry, I have always followed with interest what has

been said and published on the subject of the gas chambers allegedly used by the Nazis to exterminate some six million victims. In this way, along with others, I have interested myself in the Roques Affair.

A former student at the Central School of Arts and Manufactures of Paris (1947), in 1951 I joined the ...X...group as a chemical engineer in their technical center at Lyon, whose principle project at that time was the study and then the construction of a large cyanoacrylic complex for the ...X...company at (small French town). I participated in the works relating to pilot-installations of hydrocyanide at Toulouse, and other monomers — acrylonitrile and esters — at [small French town].

In 1960 I was appointed manager of this factory at [small French town] which, towards 1970, became the largest hydrocyanide factory in the world. In 1965, the ...X...company constructed a second factory on the outskirts of Lyon and I was appointed technical manager and then assistant general manager of the whole operation. I can therefore confirm having had a good knowledge of the problems relating to the handling of hydrocyanic acid and the extraordinary safety measures involved.

Thus it was with astonishment that I have learned of the various documents published by witnesses of the gas chambers, as well as the reports, films, and TV programs based on them.

When one recognizes the seriousness of German technicians, for whom no effort is ever too much and, above all, in aspects of safety, one is stupefied by the *puerile* character of the descriptions of the installations for gassing and their utilisation. One does not play games with hydrocyanic acid; that is the reason why, although more toxic than most other asphyxiating gases, it has never been used as a combat gas in any war.

In regard to its manufacture and industrial use, they are not possible except at the cost of draconian safety measures and the operation of extremely sophisticated and very expensive equipment.

A second argument makes me skeptical of the value of the evidence relating to gas chambers.

In 1954, when our research was sufficiently advanced and it was decided to construct industrial plants, the management requested that we should buy from [German company] the process for Acrylonitrile, for which the results of our pilot installation had not been sufficiently convincing. In effect, it was proved that in matters of chemistry and technology the Germans were more advanced than us; but on the other hand, on the question of safety, they had stayed with the old-fashioned treatment, while our Advisor-Professor had already developed the treatment of those poisoned by hydrocyanic acid with pure oxygen, a method which thereafter had to be adopted

throughout the whole world. How is it possible to imagine that with six million guinea pigs at their disposal, on whom one could try every possible experiment, the researchers of (German company) could not have made decisive progress in this field in comparison with their foreign competitors, who themselves could only experiment on animals? When one bears in mind that the application to humans of results obtained on an animal is very problematical: we have seen this very well at [small French town] when our Advisor-professor wished to test a *preventative* treatment for hydrocyanic poisoning which, on the animal, had given every satisfaction...

Finally, my thorough knowledge of the German language has allowed me to recognize the misinterpretations, omissions, and falsifications of all kinds in French translations of German documents when a photocopy of the German original has been available.

Arising from all this, what troubles me is a serious doubt of the worth of evidence relating to extermination gas chambers, and I thank and congratulate Monsieur Roques for having, through his thesis on Gerstein, considerably clarified the question.

Remaining at your disposal for any details you may require, I request you to accept, gentlemen, the assurance of my very deep respect.

(Signed Gérard Roubéix)

Anyone can make an honest mistake. Perhaps Hilberg and Reitlinger were only mistaken about Zyklon and prussic acid; but are the rest of the accounts credible?

We do well to ask this question because it goes to the heart of the problem: whether their histories are worth anything at all.

- Hilberg's corpses are "pink in color, with green spots."

In fact, they would have shown no abnormal color at all. Cyanide victims do not take on the appearance of tropical mushrooms.

(Gerstein's victims at Belzec were blue, whereas if there had been any coloration, it should have been pinkish.)

- He has an Untersturmführer Grabner "ready with stopwatch in hand" as the "political chief of the camp" of Auschwitz. This lad would have been in his late teens or very early twenties, hardly qualifying for a vote in a general election. What would Auschwitz, which, according to Hilberg, was staffed by homicidal Nazi maniacs, be doing with a "political chief" anyway?

The stopwatch, obviously, has been pinched from Gerstein's "confessions," but even so, why would he need one? The deaths took 2 to 4 minutes (they should actually have been instantaneous). What would be the purpose of a stop-watch? To time the Red Cross car that delivered the "Zyklon"?

- Reitlinger tells us that “Zyklon B” was used at Auschwitz from March 1942 and that Gerstein was sent to Belzec in August 1942 to demonstrate the system. In that case, Gerstein would have had to have gone to Auschwitz to learn what the system was. But there is no evidence that Gerstein had ever been to Auschwitz, nor did he ever try to switch over the Belzec system. According to Gerstein, he had no prussic acid with which to switch over the Belzec system; he had buried it outside the camp before he ever arrived.

Furthermore, all the evidence shows that Gerstein knew absolutely nothing about operations with prussic acid.

We have chosen the examples of these two writers not because their books are more ridiculous than most, but for the contrary reason: if thoughtlessly read as romance, their books can be quite convincing. The alert reader has to give himself a mental shake from time to time and remember that he is reading fiction, and not history.

Logic insists that there were no prussic acid gas chambers. Is it possible that there were any other types of gas chambers. The use of carbon monoxide, because of the shortage of motor-fuel, was not possible; diesel, with the additional reason that it was ineffective, equally so.

No one seems to have suggested any other gases, but let us study this question just a little further, and then close the subject.

- A gas chamber — any gas chamber — by definition, has to be airtight.

- This being so, then pumping the air out or quickly burning off the oxygen inside is quicker, more effective, safer, cleaner, simpler, and cheaper than pumping poisons in.

- No expensive construction works are necessary; a semi-basement or cellar could easily be adapted.

These facts are easily proved, and make the gas chamber theory as a whole untenable.

Is it likely that the Germans, whose engineering expertise is second to none, would have overlooked the possibility of vacuum-chambers if (a huge “if”, of course) they had had any mass-extermination project in mind?

In the concentration camps, rooms have been found and are still on show, which might have been suitable. But

- Even though they are not airtight and show no signs of ever having been used as gas chambers (e.g. plumbing), the publicity handouts still designate them as gas — not vacuum — chambers.

- Since the war, alterations to the rooms have been made to give them a more convincing appearance.

- It seems that in fact they were storerooms, sometimes garages,

and were also used as air-raid shelters.

• In any event, there is nothing extraordinary about them. They are just such rooms as one would expect to find in a vast industrial complex such as Auschwitz, for example.

And yet Gerstein was a mining engineer.

Natural “gas chambers” underground are a hazard of mines, an everyday concern.

And so, by the same token, are pumps; pumps of all sorts: pumps to pump out water, pumps to pump in air, pumps to pump out gases. One of the very first lessons he should have learned is that when a miner is deprived of oxygen he becomes unconscious almost immediately, within fifteen to thirty seconds; much more quickly than by any practical method of gassing. Within a maximum of ten minutes the victim is thoroughly dead.

When Gerstein wrote of prussic acid and hygiene, he wrote nonsense.

But the difference is that he did have a diploma as a mining engineer and therefore should have known he was writing nonsense when he wrote about gas-chambers.

We meet the same enigma constantly with Gerstein: his lack of contact with the real world.

Gerstein the Purchasing/Materials Procurement Officer — The Degesch Invoices

Gerstein states that, acting as an anti-Nazi resister and as a savior of mankind, he diverted supplies of Zyklon B to the disinfection service. Once again, he is having us understand that Zyklon B was prussic acid for mass killings, but it was not; it was a disinfectant, used by the disinfection services of the German army since 1917. There was no question of his diverting Zyklon B to the disinfection service. The disinfection service is where it should have gone: they had ordered it.

It is also very strange that although he wants us to believe that making Zyklon B “disappear into the disinfection service” (which was about as significant as making potatoes disappear into a kitchen) was his ongoing anti-Nazi wartime activity, the Degesch invoices given to the Allied investigators cover only the brief period of three and a half months, and the invoices were made out about one year before Gerstein himself decided to “disappear.”

There is also semi-reliable evidence that, in spite of Allied air raids on Dessau, the railways and so on, the normal routine supplies of Zyklon B to the disinfection services of the concentration camps

were never seriously disrupted. Thus, it seems clear that Gerstein's own private activities with Zyklon B — whatever they were — were quite a separate and different matter and had nothing to do with routine army supplies.

Briefly, the DEGESCH invoices that he gave to the Anglo-American investigators but hid from his French interrogators, look very phony indeed. To evaluate them properly, we should need to see copies of authentic invoices for supplies of Zyklon B to the disinfection services at Oranienburg and Auschwitz.

While waiting for authentic invoices to turn up, we wish to point out that there is no army inventory classification number which is invariably shown on all army stores transactions. One reason for this number is that it avoids mistakes due to illegible handwriting, etc.

- There is no DEGESCH invoice number; so how did DEGESCH keep their invoices in an accurate series on file?

- There is no army purchase order number. On what authority did DEGESCH supply (the army, according to Gerstein)? Just on Gerstein's say-so? Incredible.

- There is no railway waybill, car, or train service number.

- There is no consignment note number.

- The invoices are not signed, neither by DEGESCH as supplier/deliverer, nor by Gerstein nor anyone else as recipient for the customer. Was there no one, either in the army or in the DEGESCH firm, to take responsibility for this transaction?

Like the "confessions" themselves, these invoices reek with improbabilities. But, first and foremost, we have to bear in mind that it was illegal in the German army (as in any army) for an individual to buy army supplies in his own name and address. Therefore, Gerstein could not buy Zyklon B in his own name for the army any more than a general could buy a tank in his own name for the army.

No wonder that he kept these invoices hidden, especially when we remember that he did not pay them.

But even if his action had been "innocent" (in which case he would have arranged payment), i.e., simple but irresponsible ignorance of the standard regulations, he would probably have been court-martialled for incompetence and irregular practice.

What was Gerstein really up to?

He obviously did not understand army accounting methods had he kept back these original invoices, but this Zyklon B nevertheless actually arrived at a camp without the covering documents, the army stores department would have taken it "on charge" and circulated tracers to DEGESCH, to HQ, etc. etc. And when the delivery was

proved to have been legitimate, DEGESCH would have been duly paid.

But DEGESCH, as Gerstein admits, was not paid. Furthermore, the army could not have paid DEGESCH for these invoices because there is no evidence whatsoever on the face of them that the army ordered the goods.

Therefore, we are reasonably safe in assuming that these goods never arrived in the army stores at Auschwitz and at Oranienburg.

Did Gerstein simply steal some blank DEGESCH invoice forms during a routine visit and type them up in readiness for his surrender to the French, intending to use them as a blind? This seems unlikely, because they date from a year prior to his desertion.

Or, exploiting his personal contacts with DEGESCH, was he buying Zyklon B in his own name, pretending it would go to Auschwitz and Oranienburg, but then collecting it himself for sale on the black market?

Why should he not have been a black marketeer? We know that he was a traitor, a deserter, and a liar; so his conscience, if he had one, would not have prevented him.

He never did any actual disinfecting himself, it seems, as he was simply a very junior supply officer. But he surely knew how the product worked, or should have, as we know from the manual.

There were plenty of bombed buildings around, homeless people living in cellars; an efficient pesticide would have been much in demand. Considering he was not paying DEGESCH, he would have reaped a handsome profit. A soldier of Gerstein's calibre using his official position to work a racket must be the second oldest profession in the world.

There is good reason for this assumption.

The DEGESCH invoices indicate that Gerstein was buying Zyklon B which did not contain the warning teargas.

We know from the manuals that the German army insisted on having Zyklon B with the tear-gas content.

This constitutes almost certain proof that Gerstein was indeed buying Zyklon B for himself, because the army did not use what he was buying: Zyklon B without tear-gas.

We also know that DEGESCH's Dessau factory was bombed during this period. Thus, the supply of materials must have been restricted and DEGESCH must have given priority to its most important customer, the army, which only used Zyklon B with the tear-gas content. So, Gerstein, buying for himself, would have had to take the second-best quality Zyklon B, the one without tear-gas.

What was he doing with this Zyklon B if not selling it?

Let us also note that the fact that there was a Zyklon B without a tear-gas content proves that, so long as the instructions were followed, Zyklon B was not dangerous. If Zyklon B had been a lethal poison gas, a tear-gas content would not have been necessary: the tear-gas warning would have arrived too late. Before the victim could have wept, he would have been dead.

The mythologist historians have made great play with the odorless characteristic of Gerstein's (not the army's) Zyklon B. It was too good a drama to miss: the poor victims could not smell it, could not tell what was happening to them, and did not know they were being poisoned and about to die. This is the stuff of which great Hollywood is made.

But the Zyklon B used by the German army did have the warning tear-gas, although it was a disinfectant and not lethal poison.

However, turning the devil's advocate: would it have been more humane to inform a victim that he was about to die (even though with pure prussic acid, this is not possible); or let him just drop dead, as though struck by lightning, which is the way that true prussic acid works?

Mythologists are hard to satisfy.

Gerstein the Purchasing/Materials Officer: The Belzec Trip

Gerstein's story is full of obvious lies and inconsistencies.

Accepting all these as the delirium of a man who was at least slightly mad, there yet remains the most serious doubt that Gerstein went to Belzec at all.

- From the spring until early winter of 1942 a typhus epidemic swept through eastern Europe, with particular devastation in the prisoner-of-war and concentration camps in Poland.

- At the time of Gerstein's alleged visit in August, this plague was at its height and the Belzec camp was under quarantine.

- The anti-typhus vaccine then used by the Germans was not foolproof, but Gerstein would have had to take several anti-typhus injections.

How then does he not mention this plague, which must have been the salient experience of his trip — if he made it? And let us not overlook the fact that disinfection was, supposedly, Gerstein's specialty, homicidal so that Gerstein would have had a professional as well as personal interest.

Here we have, as it were, a transport expert who made a duty visit to the Afrika Corps in Libya and did not notice the sand. Or an architect who went to New York and did not see any skyscrapers.

This is incredible.

He does mention a hearsay report (in a very ridiculous context) of typhus in a prisoner-of-war camp at Lublin; and he mentions a previous outbreak in 1941. Neither of these incidents is connected with Belzec.

What evidence can be shown that he went to Belzec in the summer of 1942?

There is none.

It is true that he spun some yarn to a disbelieving Swedish diplomat on the Warsaw-Berlin express, but that is all.

On the contrary, the nonsense that he wrote in his “confessions” plus the fact that he omitted what must have been the outstanding feature of his trip — the plague — point in the opposite direction: he never went.

His own story of the trip has elements of surrealist comedy:

- He is sent to Kollin in Czechoslovakia to pick up what he calls prussic acid, when the parent DEGESCH firm has supplies of the identical product (whatever it was) at Dessau, just 100 kms away.

- He carries a detached-service order stamped “State Secret.” Since when were state secrets confided to the most junior ranks in the German army? Were their state secrets so un-confidential that they had rubber stamps made for them?

- His secret destination on this state mission is known only to a humble army truck driver.

- He picks up sufficient poison (if it was prussic acid) to kill at least 2–5.2 million people.

- It is packed in steel bottles, which is like saying he was carrying water in paper bags.

- A general, no less, is awaiting this junior lieutenant at Lublin.

- This general confides in him the personal views of the Führer (who had never been there).

- This general also instructs Gerstein to switch the Belzec system to prussic acid.

- Gerstein goes to Belzec, witnesses the most horrific execution imaginable, and times it with a stopwatch.

- He ignores the general’s instructions (generals do not usually enjoy being ignored, especially where state secrets are concerned).

- He dumps the poison in the countryside (so much for another state secret).

- He visits even more gas chambers at Treblinka (where, after the war, the Nuremberg Tribunal confirmed that the victims were not gassed at all, but boiled) and has a sumptuous dinner.

- On the train, he spins some yarn or other to an incredulous

Swedish diplomat.

- When he returns to Berlin, no one asks him a single question.
- And, except for listening to the BBC and the VOA, that is all we know of his activities for the next three years.

- Then, in his “confessions,” in his account of the trip, he spells nearly everybody’s name wrong. The only Belzec witness, Pfannenstiel, fails to corroborate anything; and, in all truth, if this eminent doctor had ever met Gerstein, he had almost certainly forgotten him.

He would be a courageous man indeed, or a holocaustomaniac, who believed any of this.

Gerstein the Purchasing/Materials Procurement Officer: Destruction of Government Property

It comes as a surprise to remember, if only occasionally, that Gerstein was supposed to have been a trained army officer. Not combat trained, but he was supposed to have known the rules and regulations by which armies function.

In this respect, we have the same difficulty of belief as we have with his engineering background and his training in disinfection. His knowledge of the basics of engineering (measurements) was practically nonexistent and his knowledge of disinfection nil.

We find the same lack of contact with reality in his account of the bottles of poison he dumped on his Belzec trip:

- Except in combat or in circumstances of immediate risk, such as a faulty hand-grenade, the destruction of government property was not permitted.

- If Gerstein had bought supplies at Kollin against an official purchase order, then he would have been held responsible for delivery of this stock. It was on the army’s books.

- Zyklon B (but Gerstein writes of “prussic acid”) had a shelf life of only three months. This factor might account for his often writing of the poison having spoiled, which he alleges on this occasion.

- Even so, if it were on the army’s books, had spoiled, and he wanted to destroy it, he could not have done so without reporting it to a senior officer and going through all the tedious and complicated formalities of a destruction report.

As a matter of fact, there was an additional rule in operation for Zyklon B: if it were time-expired, it should have been returned to DEGESCH so that DEGESCH could recycle the materials.

Thus this incident, petty though it may be, indicates once more:

- Gerstein was not in contact with the real world around him, and
- He lied absurdly.

Gerstein the Sugar Eater

People who knew Gerstein at this time noticed that he was always eating sweets. (He kept them in his pocket.) Failing that, he would eat lumps of sugar — all difficult to find in war-time Germany.

They have also said that (to use an old-fashioned English expression) sometimes he “felt funny,” and his attention lapsed. It was thought that he had a diabetic condition.

If Gerstein had been a sick man, there was nothing in his army files to show it. If he had had any serious ailment endangering his life or those of others, the army would have had to let him go.

And no physical ailment would really explain the moral depravity of cowardice, desertion, treason, perjury, etc., that he later demonstrated — mental decline, perhaps, but no ordinary illness.

This malady, if such it can be called, was possibly a lack of glucose in the blood (hypoglycemia).

He survived three months as a prisoner without extra sugar rations or specialized medical treatment. Perhaps he simply had a sweet tooth?

The point remains interesting. When he wrote his “confessions” he was describing a fantasy world and, at the same time, his intake of sugar was reduced.

Could there be a medical connection?

Gerstein the Anti-Nazi Resister

It is notable that none of the anti-Nazi resisters named by Gerstein, and whom he claims to have known, ever stepped forward to claim that they had known Gerstein. The best-known, Pastor Niemöller, politely repudiated having any knowledge of him throughout the war.

The records show that while he had gotten himself expelled from the Nazi party in 1936 (which is not quite the same thing as becoming an anti-Nazi), he was willing enough to ingratiate himself with the Nazis again by joining the Waffen SS, which he likes to pretend was the organization at the very center of Nazism — though it was not. Gerstein is either fooling us or fooling himself if he imagined that the army did not have his civilian files. Upon his enlistment, they were automatically transferred to the army. If the Waffen SS had any special importance to Nazism would Gerstein, who had been expelled from the party and was on all evidence a crackpot, have been allowed to join?

Gerstein says he joined to look into the bottom of the sorcerer’s pot. But in March 1941, when he volunteered, there was no sorcerer’s pot to look into the bottom of. The mass-extinction

stories and the gas-chamber myths were put about only towards the very end of the war by propagandists who had special reasons of their own for doing so, noteworthy among them Gerstein himself.

Gerstein the Anti-Nazi Resister: von Otter and the Two Dutch Volunteer Workers

This evidence too is phony:

- The Swedish regime of the time was not neutral. On the contrary, it was a passive ally of Germany, allowing the transit of German troops to attack Norway, supplying war materials, and so on.

- Baron von Otter, like his colleague Baron von Lagerfelt, were, as their names imply, members of the old Baltic aristocracy, of German origin.

- Von Otter later said he had gone to Warsaw because he was called as a witness in a petty criminal trial. Does this make sense? As a diplomat, his affidavit, mailed in the diplomatic bag, would have been perfectly adequate. Who has ever seen a diplomat giving evidence in court, even in peacetime?

- Warsaw was a restricted military area, a railhead with tens of thousands of German troops on their way to and from the Russian front. Even a diplomat would have needed a special travel pass. It was a long and uncomfortable train ride from Berlin, where von Otter was actually accredited. Who would make such a journey, into a war zone, unless for some really solid and important reason?

- The two Dutch workers were paid standard wages; they had merely volunteered to work in Berlin. Although Holland had a strong Nazi party, they need not have been Nazis themselves. However, it is highly unlikely that they were averse to Nazi Germany if they had volunteered to work in the Nazi capital.

At the end of the war, when the witch hunts began, these three people would naturally have been anxious to keep out of trouble.

For three years, von Otter had done virtually nothing. Then, the Allies having won and the issues being clarified, he and his friend von Lagerfelt, aware that the Gerstein affair had reached the world press and therefore might prove an embarrassment to the Swedish government in general, dropped the mask of neutrality.

Lagerfelt (presumably with the approval of his superiors in Stockholm) wrote to the British Foreign Office in London.

The British F.O. had no more concern with the alleged crimes committed on Polish territory by German nationals than it had with alleged crimes committed by Italian nationals in Chicago. The Swedes, as trained diplomats, must have known this. The proper addressee was the Allied War Crimes Commission, which had offices through-

out Europe.

Why the British Foreign Office? Why London?

The explanation seems to be that Lagerfelt's letter was a feint. He could truthfully say he had informed the Allies, and he had also reduced the risk of a reply to the minimum, thus avoiding Swedish involvement in the affair.

There is evidence that von Otter did not believe one word that Gerstein had told him. He thought that Gerstein was distraught and unbalanced, that Gerstein was one of those importunate nuisances whom one sometimes meets on railway trains and in other public places. Von Otter had not the slightest intention of disrupting Swedish-German relations or his own career by making an official report on what Gerstein had told him, until the scandal exploded three years later.

It is easy to find excuses for von Otter. If he did not believe Gerstein, then he was in the right.

All the same, if von Otter had reported to the Red Cross or one of several international organisations at the time, they might have gotten an inspector across to Belzec and perhaps the Zyklon B and holocaust mythology could have been scotched at the source. That chance, however small, was missed.

Gerstein did not meet von Otter and the Dutchmen by a prearranged plan. Their encounters were pure chance.

There is no evidence that Gerstein discussed his Belzec visit (if it had occurred) with German friends.

It is a simple fact of life that places like the Belzec described by Gerstein cannot be kept secret. If they had existed, the Germans would have known. In Berlin, he was surrounded by tens of thousands of soldiers who had served on the eastern front. He did not tell Germans because they would not have believed him; and, in addition, he ran the risk of being shot for spreading false stories against his own country.

For the moment, unless other evidence comes to light, his chance conversations sound very much like a self-glorying soldier telling listeners whom he hopes will be interested and sympathetic his imaginary war exploits. He had no scruples about lying and, as we know from his obsessive "confessions," once he got started his imagination soared.

Gerstein the Anti-Nazi Resister: The Papal Nuncio

There is no evidence whatsoever, as it happens, that Gerstein ever tried to meet the papal nuncio. We have only Gerstein's word for it, and Gerstein's word is worthless.

If, however, Gerstein did try, religious expert and Christian martyr though he was, then he was peculiarly ignorant on two points about the Catholic church, which any intelligent non-Catholic would know:

- The nuncio (as his title implies) was responsible for the Vatican's relations with the German government.

The German hierarchy was responsible for the church's affairs within Germany. In this context, the nuncio would have been guilty of a serious lapse of protocol (which means, in our language, a gratuitous insult to the German government) if he had discussed German affairs other than with an official of the German government.

It is unthinkable that a papal nuncio would take that risk; the maintenance of relations with any government, no matter what its character, is at the heart of the work of the Catholic church, so that it can maintain contact and guard the interests of its faithful. Has anyone ever heard of the Vatican breaking off diplomatic relations with even the most dastardly and murderous governments?

- The Vatican will never take sides when Catholics are in armed conflict with each other. This policy, too, has been well-known for centuries.

Still, if Gerstein felt as strongly about his Belzec experiences (assuming he had been there) as he said in his "confessions" (three years later), why did he not write? Even the Vatican reads its mail, which was not censored. He says he made a "detailed referral" to the secretary to the Archbishop, Dr. Winter, but we have no evidence for this either. Was this referral written or spoken? Who were the hundreds of thousands of other persons to whom he retailed these stories? How is it that the Gestapo did not arrest him, as they had before the war, for subversion?

As it happens, Gerstein was a Protestant, although there was nothing wrong in his trying to approach the Catholic authorities, as this would have been a matter of common concern. But were there not Protestant leaders who would have been equally outraged by his revelations had they been true? Surely, there were. But here his problem seems to have been that the Protestant authorities were Germans, not foreign Italian prelates and thus, being of the country, had a much clearer idea of what could or could not be believed.

Nevertheless, if Gerstein had made a credible report to some Catholic authority, it would be fair to assume that it would somehow have gotten through to the Vatican.

As is to be expected, the volumes of documents published by the Vatican on events during the Second World War show nothing under the name of Kurt Gerstein. Even so, there may yet be something still unpublished on file.

Have any of the Hochuth, Friedlander, and Joffroy group, who

claim such an exemplary morality for themselves, demonstrated the basic decency of asking the Vatican? One would like to know, because this would help indicate whether a search of the Vatican archives is worthwhile or not.

Failing that (perhaps Gerstein's report, if there was one, was sent anonymously) the Vatican could be asked whether they lost 2,000 or 8,000 Polish clergy during the war: Gerstein's figures would have included the Primate perhaps, but at least half a dozen archbishops and cardinals, some scores of bishops, principals of schools, seminaries, colleges and the like. Pope Pius XII was reputed to have been an able administrator. Is it possible that 2,000 or 8,000 Polish clergy should go missing and the Vatican not know?

It is curious how the propagandist writers have tried to canonize a scoundrel and a charlatan such as Gerstein, against whom we have ample proof, and have tried to pillory Pius XII, against whom we have no proof at all.

They claim as their justification that they are anti-Nazi, which is a safe and easy thing to be now that the Nazis themselves are safely off the scene. They also claim that the Nazis were authoritarian and racist: yet, what would be the difference between attacking, let us say, a Jew with no justification and a Pope with no justification?

This illiberality of the propagandist school and the powers behind it who support the authorised versions of history has much in common with the methods they allege against the Nazis.

Gerstein the Patriot

A fable has evolved that a German who was a traitor to his country during and after the war was automatically and by the same token some sort of superpatriot, a hero of human rights, democracy and so forth. This was the glorious picture that Gerstein wanted to paint of himself: the anguished Christian humanitarian who would have preferred to die with the Jews in the Belzec gas chambers if he had not had the more important duty to continue living and witness the truth — which solemn duty he performed by means of accidental encounters with one embarrassed Swede and two obscure Dutchmen.

Gerstein was in fact a very slippery and erratic character. He says that the Nazis were anti-Christian (which they were not) but he abandons his Christian beliefs to join the party all the same. Then — as he clearly states — he joins the Waffen SS with the avowed intention of betrayal. He gets into some kind of private racket with a government pesticide. Then on evidence which is either patently false or not supplied at all, he deserts his post and his family, and betrays his comrades and his country to the Allies.

Did he have any loyalty to anyone except himself? Apparently not. In his “confessions” it is interesting to note how glibly he names names, names that he cannot even spell, of fellow officers and colleagues.

Innocent or not, these people would have had a miserable time of it after the war, because Gerstein himself was formally accused of war crimes, and they had been (or so he pretends) his associates.

One could find this a very unpleasant trait in his character, *viz*: “I am drowning, so I’ll take the ship down with me.”

Gerstein the Husband and Father

When Gerstein ran away from Berlin, he spent some nights at home and then ran to the Allies. This was a nerve-wracking period for Germany, its towns devastated, the country overrun by its enemies, people running short of food; but the army was still fighting.

During these catastrophic months — the worst in Germany’s history — he wrote one letter to his wife, mainly on the subject of his own affairs; he hardly mentions his three children.

Although he is at liberty and has some money, he omits to mail the letter. But even if his wife had received it, he had done his best to conceal his whereabouts, and she would have had great difficulties in discovering a way to reply to him.

At Rottweil, he had possibly been too busy for the first two weeks writing his “confessions,” but thereafter he had ample time.

If he had any concern or anxiety for his family, he kept it well under control.

Gerstein the Escaper

Had he not blurted out his Belzec stories, the French would have turned him back. They had no need of more prisoners who would have to be fed and accommodated.

Like everyone else in Europe, Gerstein must have known this, and he therefore prepared his former arrest warrants etc. and the DEGESCH invoices in advance. He did not want to be sent back.

Why did Gerstein, from among millions of disbanded German soldiers, run away from Germany and seek refuge and protection by deserting?

Although he used his Belzec stories as a pretext, they can not have been a reason. His Belzec stories were stale by three years, and, as he made no real effort to report them, he had not cared deeply about them at the time, or subsequently.

A significant detail, highlighting this aspect, is that France was of

course a signatory to the Geneva convention regulating the treatment of prisoners of war. Thus, the French should have registered Gerstein with the Red Cross, or Gerstein could have asked to be registered. This would have ensured that Gerstein could write home, that his wife continued to receive the soldier's family allowance, and so on.

We can assume that in the early days of his surrender this detail could have been overlooked. But later, if he had wanted to contact his family according to established rules, the French would have permitted that. If not, he could have appealed to Beckhardt or Mattéi during his interrogations; they were both military lawyers, and had to observe the rules.

But there is no evidence that Gerstein wanted to contact his family or anyone else in Germany. When he was in the Cherche-Midi prison, the chaplain was responsible for liaison with the Paris office of the Red Cross. Did he report that Gerstein wanted to write home?

If Gerstein had merely been finagling with Zyklon B, it is very unlikely that the German military authorities, in so far as they existed at all, would or could have had him disciplined. Similarly, it is almost impossible that DEGESCH would have sued him for payment. Gerstein, who had had a very moral upbringing, may not have known this and may have been frightened. He may have been frightened too at losing face with his family and friends — he who had been such a moral activist — when his games were found out.

When he left Berlin, it was almost surrounded by the Russians. He would not have wished to be taken prisoner by the Russians.

But he did commit the unforgivable sins of cowardice in the face of the enemy and desertion. He turned yellow, in other words, and for this, many a German, military or otherwise, would have shot him without compunction.

Realizing this, was it en route from Berlin to his home that he decided to go the whole hog and seek refuge from his country's enemies? His life was at risk so long as he stayed in Germany. What other refuge was there?

And hence his special effort to ingratiate himself with his Belzec stories.

Gerstein was no thinker; his powers of foresight and reflection were nil. But once a prisoner, there was plenty of time to ponder on the results of his action. Once he had written his "confessions," which had reached the world press by at least 4 July, he must have known that he could never go back to Germany and live a normal life under his own name. There were no excuses for him, and no one likes an egotistical and vainglorious turncoat who, at the last moment, runs to the enemy and tries to benefit from his own country's defeat.

Gerstein the Accused

After the interminable mire of Gerstein's "confessions," Commandant Mattéi's interrogation arrives like clear and refreshing water.

This was Gerstein's first full-length appearance before a professional criminal interrogator.

We know that Mattéi, like most Frenchmen at the time, was, after six years of an unwanted war including five years of enemy occupation, a somewhat tired and disillusioned man. Although he kept his professional self-control, he had little patience with pretenders such as Gerstein who, when Germany's defeat was accomplished fact, suddenly crawled out of the woodwork and declared what terrific anti-Nazis—anti-Nazis of heroic dimensions — they had really been all the time and who, moreover, had not a shred of evidence in proof.

Gerstein's "confessions" were no proof. They were in themselves improbable and they were three years out of date. His arrests by the police and expulsion from the Nazi party were no proof either that he had been an enemy of the Nazi regime. If Gerstein had been a true anti-Nazi, why had the Nazis let him go and then allowed him to join the Waffen SS?

Mattéi was not duped; and he had actually watched Gerstein for hours, assessing him. He did not, as Gerstein had apparently been hoping, send him off to Nürnberg in a private train to be a star witness against his countrymen. Mattéi continued the prosecution of Gerstein as a war criminal.

The last interrogation, his failure to dupe Mattéi, must have been the most terrible letdown, a shock, a most humiliating exposure of his own stupidity for Gerstein, who had cast himself in a star role as spokesman and witness for the righteous at Nürnberg.

By this time, too, Gerstein might have realized that after he had named all his names, the people he had accused could equally well have turned the tables on him, and accused him with just as much evidence to back them up, i.e., nothing but an imaginative story. This would have been a chilling thought. Many people were being wrongly accused and punished at the time. What might he have gotten? Life? Execution perhaps?

Gerstein the Suicide

Gerstein died the day before he was due to appear again before Mattéi. The circumstances of his death are curious:

- How did he cut away the selvage of his bed-cover?
- How could he hang himself, almost kneeling?

• Were the cell-blocks in this high-security prison not patrolled?

And then, later, the letters in which he was said to have declared his intention to commit suicide all disappeared, along with other documents which must have had some significance.

If, in fact, Gerstein had left any suicide notes, then they should have been produced at an inquest and copies put in the coroner's file. But an inquest was not held. A simple police report did all the business.

How, then, was the body buried? A committal for burial has to be signed by a coroner. Even the police cannot arrive at a cemetery with a corpse without the legal papers stating that the body is to be buried.

Even more inexplicably, the military prison authorities should have informed Gerstein's next of kin, which is one of the details stated on the prison registration form, and also the Red Cross. But his wife was left in the dark for all of three years and even then was not told that he had committed suicide, nor where he was buried.

What happened to Gerstein's personal possessions, such as a wristwatch, cash, his wallet, perhaps a photograph or two?

Normally, these odds and ends should have been handed over to the chaplain or the Red Cross to be sent back to his family. The authorities knew he had a family because, even if he had not stated next of kin on his prison registration form, details of his family were shown on the reports of his interrogations.

Gerstein evidently knew the chaplain. What did the chaplain do, if anything?

These questions could be continued indefinitely and arrive at no result unless the facts are reinvestigated. Suffice it to say, for the moment, that a great many pieces of the jigsaw puzzle are missing, and the pieces that we do have do not interlock.

Footnotes To Afterword

1. *Op. cit.*, page 627.

2. *The SS/Alibi of a Nation* (1922-1945), page 285.

Appendix I

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Rottweil 26 avril 1945.

senior a. D.
Gerstein
ingénieur
à la
l'état pour
chimie

Indications personnelles Gerstein, Kurt

Bergassessor, ~~hors de service~~, ingénieur diplômé

Né le 11 août 1905 à Muenster/Westphalie

Profession actuelle: associé de l'usine De Limon, Flühme & Co, gainage automatique à Düsseldorf, rue de l'industrie 1-17.

Père: Ludwig Emil Gerstein, Landgerichtspräsident à Hagen/Westph. Brunnenstrasse 52.

Mère: Clara Gerstein née Schumann + 1931.

Marié depuis 2 mai 1937 à Elfriede Gerstein née Wenck à Tübingen, Gartenstrasse 24. - Trois enfants: Arnold 5 ans, Hilke 3 1/2 ans, Ulf 2 ans.

Vie: 1905-1910 à Muenster/Westphalie. 1911-1919

à Sarrebruck, 1919-1921 Halberstadt, 1921-1923

Neuroppin, Brandenburg. Maternum 1925/Neuroppin

Etudes: 25-1931 Marbourg/Jahre, Aix en Chapele

Berlin - Charlottenburg, universités et hautes écoles

de technique. 1931 Examen du Ingénieur diplômé

- Depuis 1925 membre actif de la Jeunesse

protestante organisée ("Union chrétienne

des jeunes hommes" et surtout de la jeunesse

chrétienne élève appelé BK = "Bibelkreis" =

"Cercle autour de la Sainte Bible". -

Politique: Adhérent de Stresemann et Brüning,

actif pour eux. - Depuis 1932 position responsable

en toute Allemagne à l'association de la jeunesse

élève protestante. Depuis 1933, fin poursuivie

de la part de Gestapo pour activités chrétiennes

contre l'état nazi. - 2 mai 1933 entrée dans la

partie NSDAP. - 2 octobre 1936 exclusion de

la NSDAP pour activités p. contre partie et état

30 janvier 1935 protestation publique au théâtre

de ville de Hagen/Westphalie contre un drame anti

chrétien "Wilhelm". Rosé et blessé de part des

Nazis. - 27 Novembre 1935 examen du Bergassessor

Alors, employé de l'état à Sarrebruck.

27 - II. 1936 emprisonnement par la Gestapo pour "activité contre l'état" pour avoir envoyé 8.500 brochures antinazi aux hauts employés de l'état. En prison jusqu'à fin octobre 1936. Exclusion en dehors de service de l'état. - Décembre 1936 jusqu'au commencement de la guerre: études médicales à Tuebingen, institut pour mission protestantique médicale tropicale.

Le tiers - environ - de mes revenus - cela faisait 1/3 de 18.000.- Reichsmark par an - j'ai donné, depuis 1931, pour mes buts idéologiques religieux. J'ai fait imprimer et envoyés par poste à mes frais ces 230.000 brochures religieuses antinazies. -

14 juillet - 28 août 1938 deuxième emprisonnement au camp de concentration Weiskirchen. - Ecoutant des massacres des imbéciles et aliénés, choqué et blessé dans mon intérieur, ayant tel cas dans ma famille, je n'avais qu'un seul désir: Voir, voir dans toute cette machinerie et alors: crier dans tout le peuple!

- Muni de deux références des deux employés de Gestapo, ayant traité mon cas, il n'était pas difficile d'entrer dans la SS armée. - 10 mars - 2 juin 1941 instruction élémentaire du soldat à Hamburg - Langenhorn, Arnhem et Oranienburg avec 40 médecins. Pour mes doubles études - technique et médecine - je reçus l'ordre d'entrer au service médico-technique de SS Fuehrungs-Hauptamt - service sanitaire de la SS armée.

À ce lieu de service je me choisis moi-même le devoir de construire aussitôt.

il y a 3 institutions:

- 1) Veitce à la route Lublin - Limbourg au secteur à la ligne de démarcation Ruvo. Maximum 15.000 par jour (ou)
- 2) Sobibor, je ne suis pas convaincu, si pas ou!) 20.000 " " maximum
- 3) Treblinka 120 km NNE de Warszew, ou, 25.000 " " "

Maidanek, près la fabrique, (ou) en préparation.

Il vous faudra - dit G. Gotschek - faire la désinfection de très nombreuses quantités de vêtements, dix ou vingt fois la quantité de la "Spinnstoff - Seemannsberg", qu'on ne faisait que pour ^{les} ~~occasions~~ la provenance des vêtements juifs.

Il y a G. Gotschek:

Votre deuxième devoir —: de ^{changer} ~~transformer~~ nos c. l'indes

le 400, maintenant fonctionnant avec échappement d'un
 ancien moteur Diesel, à une tonne plus coque et
 plus vite, c'est acide pourique. Mais le Futur et
 l'Humain qui habitent ici le 15 août (avant hier),
 m'ont fait ~~effroi~~ ^{effroi}. Toute personne, qui doit voir - et vivre
 de la mort, doit être accompagnée par moi, Glorioso. Mais
 le Professeur Gammardil: Mais qu'est-ce que dit le futur?
 nos vides: Plus vite, plus vite, plus vite - toute l'échelle, l'élite.
 - Alors le Ministre de l'Éducation Dr. S. de Turenne: N'est-ce
 pas meilleur de brûler les corps au lieu de
 les enterrer? Une autre génération, peut-être, se pensera
 d'une autre manière. - Nos Glorioso: Me hâter, si,
 mais vous, viendrait jamais une génération, qui ne
 comprend pas votre œuvre si bon, si nécessaire, qui soit
 si ^{lèche} ~~bonne~~ et carrière, alors, messieurs, tout le National-
 stinisme était pour rien. Au contraire, il faut en
 enlever des tables de bronze, auxquelles il est fixé,
 que nous, nous avons eu le courage de ~~intégrer~~
~~une~~ et œuvre gigantesque. - Alors Hilari: Oui, mais
 Glorioso, c'est un mot, c'est l'œuvre

Opinion: —

Opinion -
 d'autre jour, nous passons à Dniepr. Une petite gare
 d'acier ^{à la} ~~avec~~ ^{immédiatement} sable jaune, ~~seulement~~ à gauche
 = N! - la gauche et le chemin de fer. Au sud, par la
 chaux, quelques maisons du service et l'affiche
 Line de service "Belock de la Dniepr" - Globocnik me
 présente à Hauptsturmführer ~~Sturm~~ ^{de la Dniepr}
 fil ~~qui~~ ^{qui} ont - avec grande retenue les installations.
 Tout jour, on ne ~~signif~~ ^{voit} pas les morts, mais, à l'odeur
 la toute la région, assise en charnier, était
 particulièrement. - À côté de la petite gare, il y avait
 une grande "cage", "cuvier" avec un guichet
 "valeurs". Mais une chambre à 10° chaudières,
 "coiffures". Mais un coin ~~de~~ au plein
 vent avec des tabellés et affiches: Aux trains et
 à la Dniepr!

Kurt Gerstein

Fernruf: Vacha 485
Postcheck-Konto Berlin 3160
und Dortmund 9740

Avez vous une machine à écrire en V.D.L.H. ?

214

61 Le Humphreys Wirth, ~~frappé~~, prend en carache: 11, 12 coups en visage du Herain, qui est en aide de Herkenbrot. - Après deux - heures 49 minutes - le montre stop à tout régime - le Dica commence. Jusqu'à ce moment, les hommes des 4 chambres déjà remplis vivent, vivent, 4 fois 750 ~~hommes~~ personnes à 4 fois 45 m cube!

De nouveau, 16 minutes passent : beaucoup, c'est évident
sont morts. On voit par la fenêtre petite fenêtre, dans l'angle
la lampe électrique fait voir, pour un moment, l'intérieur
vieux de la chambre. Après 28 minutes encore peine, qui
survivent, après 32, enfin, tout est mort ! - Et à ce
côté, les juifs travailleurs ouvrent les portes de bois. On
leur a promis, pour leur service terrible, la liberté et
quelques procédés de ^{régulation} des valeurs. Comme des colonies
de baselle les juifs sont encore debout, pas n'étant pas la moindre
place de ~~passer~~ ou de s'incliner. Même morts, on courait
encore. Les familles, qui se sentent encore les mains encore mortes.
On a peine de les séparer, pour faire vides les chambres pour
la prochaine charge. On jette les corps, bleus, humides de
soudre et de l'urine, les jambes pleines de ~~marque~~ et de
sang périodique. Parmi tous, les bébés, les corps des enfants
mais on n'a pas de temps. Deux douzaines de ^{par moyen} travailleurs
s'occupent de contrôler les bouches, qu'ils avaient avec des ^{crochets}
~~les~~. "Or à gauche, sans or à droite !" - Autres contrôles
~~appret~~ quintalier pour monnaie, brillants, or. Les deux
arrachent avec main les dents d'or, pous, couronnes
Parmi tous, le Haufmann Wirth. Il est à son élément, ne
~~donnant~~ ^{présent} une grande boîte de conserve, remplie d'indes
il me dit : Eprouvez le poids de l'or, seulement d'hier et
d'avant-hier ! Et vous ne croyez pas que nous trouvons
par jour : les dollars, les brillants, l'or ! Mais voyez vos
mêmes : - Alors, il me guide à un bijoulier juif, qui avait
la responsabilité de tous ces valeurs. On ne jete encore rien
un chef de Kaufhaus des Waleis, Berlin, qui avait été pour
tous un commando travail, et un petit homme avec
violence, le chef de ce commando travailleurs juif.
"C'est un capitaine de l'armée KK d'Autriche, chère
la croix de fer allemande de première classe !"
Alors, les corps cadavres nus furent jetés dans des grandes
fosses de 100 x 20 x 12 mètres, situées auprès des chambres de r.
Après quelques jours, les corps se gonflaient et tout s'élevait de
1-3 mètres - ^{moyen} ~~par~~ le gaz, qui se formait dans les cadavres.

f. Après quelques jours, le gonflement fini, les corps tombèrent
ensemble. Autre jour, les fosses furent remplies de
Bergassessor a. D. urt Gerstein nouveau et couverts de 10 centimètres de saie.
Diplomingenieur
Le Hauptmann Wirth me pria de pas proposer à Berlin quelque chose
autre méthode et de laisser tout, comme qu'il était. Je
pensais que l'acide formique était déjà de l'huile pour la
transport et très dangereux et d'être forcé de d'entendre l'acide
se fit aussitôt. — Autre jour, nous allions avec l'auto de
Hauptmann Wirth à Trilinka, 10 km environ de l'église NNE.
L'institution de cet lieu de mort était presque la même
comme à Belzec, mais plus grande encore. (S)chambres de gaz,
et vrais montagnes de vêtements et de linge de 35-40 mètres
d'altitude. Alors, à notre honneur on faisait un banquet avec
tous les employés de la SS. Le Obersturmbannführer Professor Dr. med.
Pfenneuschil fit un sermon: Votre œuvre, c'est un grand devoir
et un devoir si nécessaire. S'il on voit les corps des juifs,
on comprend la grandeur de votre bon œuvre. — Le dîner
lui-même était simple, mais, selon l'ordre de Himmler
lui-même, les occupés de ce service recevaient ce qu'ils
voulaient de beurre, viande etc. — Au congé, on nous
offra plusieurs kilos de beurre et grand nombre de bouteilles
d'alcool. Moi, je fis le mensonge d'avoir de tout de notre
forme. Pour cette raison, Pfenneuschil prit encore ma
position. — Nous allions avec l'auto à l'église. Wagon
lit déjà étant parti, j'attendais l'autre train. Attendant
vaine^{ment} un lit libre, je rencontrais le secrétaire
~~général~~ de la légation Suède Baron von Otter. Tous les
lits occupés nous passions la nuit au corridor du
wagon lit. Alors, sous la fraîche impression, j'ai lui
raconté tout avec la pensée de réparer tout à son
gouvernement et aux alliés. Il me demanda une référence
de moi-même. J'ai lui donné l'adresse de Generalmajor a. D.
D. Otto Dibelius, Berlin - Friedrichs, Brückengasse 2, ainsi la
chambre de la curie de l'Union chrétienne et de la résistance
protestante contre le nazisme. J'ai quelques années
plus, j'ai eu encore une fois avec la Commission de l'Union
chrétienne. Il me dit, qu'il avait fait un rapport
au gouvernement Suède, un rapport, qui, je crois, par
mots, avait grande influence ^{sur les relations} de la Suède et de l'Alle-
magne. Ma tentative de réparer tout cela avec la
la légation de Suède, n'avait pas grand succès.

Bei. 1122207 a. D.
Kurf Gerstein
Diplomingenieur

Dr. G. Peters
riedberg
Hesse

2) pour - comme j'ai dit - discrétion, en vérité pour être quelquement libre dans la disposition et pour mieux faire disparaître l'acide toxique.

Je n'ai jamais payé la livraison. Le directeur de la maison qui a fourni l'acide, m'a dit, qu'il a fourni - pour leur des hommes - acide pourri en ampoules.

Le 22 avril 1945, j'avais attendue la prise de la ville d'Hechingen, Wurttemberg. J'avais donné le conseil aux citoyens et à la mairie de Hechingen de rendre la ville aux Français. Les habitants étaient prêts, on annonça des troupes allemandes pour tenir Hechingen. Alors, j'ai passé les lignes Français et je me suis présenté, de moi même, volontaire à chev. le commandant Français de la ville de Reutlingen. J'ai lui présenté mes papiers

c'est: 2 mandats d'arrêt de la Gestapo
Exclusion de la partie NSDAP
réserve spéciale du bureau des
postes Martin Niemöller
papiers militaires.

Après avoir examiné les papiers, chev. le commandant de Reutlingen m'a donné un papier avec le texte suivant:

"Le titulaire n'est pas un vrai SS et ne doit pas être traité comme tel, mais, au contraire, avec tous ménagements."

C'était chev. le Commandant de Reutlingen qui proposa, selon mes désirs, que je serai présenté à un lieu de service qui s'intéressait de mes connaissances du nazisme et qui, peut-être, ferait usage de mon antinazisme. Malheureusement, les papiers (mandats d'arrêt de la Gestapo etc.) sont restés à Tübingen, Gasteur. 24
un corridor de ma maison, ou il me donnait
il avait encore permis de prendre chemise, blouse à dents

pour donner les renseignements, on ne peut se donner le compte d'une manière vraiment exacte et nombre des hommes heu's! S'il on avait pu avoir les passeports etc. il ne s'agit d'une très petite partie de tout le nombre des morts. La plupart est morte au voyage. Et c'est valable aussi pour les Polonais et Tchecoslovaques No III, qui sont disparus, tous les mêmes chimères de la mort. Ils furent choisis pour la mort par des commissions de Pseudo-Médicins simple jeune, - hommes à l'imagination, qui portaient ces vêtements pour, selon leur désirer les vases, malades etc. qui n'étaient pas encore dignes de vivre pour ne pouvoir pas encore travailler. —

77

Le hauptmann Block me prie en pas pour à Berlin quelque chose autre me Block. Il a l'air tout comme qu'il était. Je me dis — ce que j'aurais fait à tout cas! — que l'écide proutigat c'était déjà détraqué par le bras — post et devenu très dangereux. Alors, je suis forcé d'interrompre l'écide — je ne le puis pas. — Autre jour nous allons par l'auto de hauptmann Block à Treblinka 120 km environ en Warsaw NNE. Il est dit de ce lieu de mort c'était presque la même comme à Belzec, mais plus grande encore: 8 chambres de gaz et trois montagnes de vêtements et de linge de 35-40 mètres d'altitude. Alors, à notre honneur on fit un banquet avec tous les employés de la SS. Le Obersturmbannführer Dr. Pflummertil fit un sermon: Votre oeuvre c'est un grand devoir et un devoir si nécessaire. Et si on voit les corps des juifs on comprend le grandeur de votre oeuvre. Et moi seul, il avait dit: C'est vraiment grandeur de travail. Et c'est une chose très humaine etc.... — Ledit lui-même n'était pas simple. Mais, selon l'origine de l'homme

32
Bericht K.G. 7. 26.4.1945 (Rott-
weil) (f.d.) französischen Militärgouverneur in Französisch.
(Handschrift)

Umfang: 11 gez. Bl.

à T. Comme, on ne peut se donner le compte d'une manière vraiment exacte et nombre des hommes heu's! S'il on avait pu avoir les passeports etc. il ne s'agit d'une très petite partie de tout le nombre des morts. La plupart est morte au voyage. Et c'est valable aussi pour les Polonais et Tchecoslovaques No III, qui sont disparus, tous les mêmes chimères de la mort. Ils furent choisis pour la mort par des commissions de Pseudo-Médicins simple jeune, - hommes à l'imagination, qui portaient ces vêtements pour, selon leur désirer les vases, malades etc. qui n'étaient pas encore dignes de vivre pour ne pouvoir pas encore travailler. —

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On jeta les corps, vides, humides et souillés
à la dérobée les jambes pleines de croûte et de
sang, perilleux. Parmi tous, les vieillards, les
corps des enfants. - Mais on n'a pas de temps.
Deux douzaines de travailleurs s'occupent à con-
trôler les bœufs, qu'ils occupent par moyen
de crochets de fer: - Or à gauche - sans or à
droite! - D'autres contrôlent armes et
généralités pour monnaie, brillants, or.
Les dentistes arrachent par moyen des martels
les dents d'or, poutres, couronnes. Parmi tous,
le Hauptmann Wirth. Il est à son élément,
me présentant une grande boîte de conserve,
remplie des dents d'or; il me dit: Epruvez
le poids de l'or! Et c'est seulement d'acier et
d'argent-bleu! Et vous ne croyez pas ce que
nous trouvons par jour! Les dollars, les brillants,
l'or. Mais voyez vous-mêmes! - Alors il me
guida à un bijoutier juif, qui avait la respon-
sabilité de tous ces valeurs. - On me fit encore
voir un des chefs du Grand Magasin de l'ouest,
du Kaufhaus des Westens, Berlin, qui avait des
fonctions au commando de Berlin et un
petit homme avec violon, chef de ce coman-
do de travailleurs juifs. C'était un capitaine
de l'armée Uetke d'Autriche, chevalier de
Croix de fer Allemande première classe! -
Alors les cadavres nus furent jetés dans
des grandes fosses de 100 x 20 x 12 mètres,
situées auprès des chambres de mort. Après quelques
jours, les corps se gonflaient, et tout s'élevait
de 2-3 mètres par moyen de gaz, qui se formait
dans les cadavres. Après quelques jours, le gonflement
fini, les corps tombaient enroulés. Autre jour les
fosses furent remplies de nouveau et couvertes de 10
centimètres de sable. - même temps plus tard - j'ai encore
vu à Berlin les rails de chemin-de fer - et à
bout les cadavres par moyen de la même façon et de
l'excavation pour faire disparaître les cadavres. Il y en

Kurt Gerstein.

Indications personnelles: G e r s t e i n, Kurt, Bergassessor, exclus du service de l'état pour antinazie 1936, ingénieur diplômé. Né le 11 août 1905 à Münster Westphalie. Associé de l'usine De Limon, Fluhme & Co, graissage automatique pour locomotives, frein Westinghouse, Knorr etc., Dusseldorf, Industriestrasse 1-17.

Père: Ludwig Gerstein, Landgerichtspräsident, Hagen Westf. hors de serv. Mère: Clara Gerstein née Schmoumann morte 1931.

Marié depuis 2 mai 1937 à Elfriede née Densch à Tuebingen Gartenstrasse 24, 3 enfants Arnulf 5 ans Adelheid 3 1/2 ans Olaf 2 ans.

Vie: 1905-1911 Münster. 1911-1919 Sarrebruck. 19-21 Halberstadt 21-25 Neuruppin près de Berlin, maturum 1925.-Etudes: 1925-31 Harbourg/Lohn, Aix La Chapelle, Berlin-Charlottenburg, universités et hautes écoles de technique. 1931 examen Ingénieur diplômé.-Depuis 1925 membre actif de la jeunesse protestantique organisée Union Chrétienne des jeunes hommes " et surtout de la jeunesse Chrétienne élevée appelé BK= BibelKreis = Cercle autour de la Bible."

Politique: Adhérent de Stroschmann et Brüning, actif pour eux.- Depuis 1933, juin, poursuivi de la part de Gestapo pour activité Chrétienne contre l'état nazi.- 2 mai 1933 entrée dans la NSDAP.- 2 octobre 1936 exclusion de la NSDAP pour activités contre partie et état. 30 janvier 1935 protestation publique au théâtre de ville de Hagen/Westphalie contre le drame antichrétien "Wittekind" - Rossé et blessé de part des Nazis.- 27 Novembre 1935 examen du Bergassessor. Alors, employé de l'état à Sarrebruck.- 27 septembre 1936 emprisonnement par la gestapo pour activité contre l'état.- pour avoir envoyé 8.500 brochures antinazies aux hauts employés de l'état. En prison jusqu'à fin octobre 1936. Exclusion en dehors du service de l'état. Repris en Décembre 1936 jusqu'au commencement de la guerre: études médicales à Tuebingen, institut pour mission protestantique médicale tropicale.- Le tiers -environ- de mes revenus, cela faisait 1/3 de 18.000 Reichsmark par an, j'ai donné, depuis 1931, pour mes buts idéales religieux. J'ai fait imprimer et envoyés par poste à mes frais occa. 230.000 brochures religieuses antinazies.

14 juillet -28 août 1938 deuxième emprisonnement au camp de concentration Veltheim. Étant des masses des imbéciles et aliénés à Grafeneck, Hadamar etc., choqué et blessé dans mon intérieur, ayant tel cas dans ma famille, je n'avais qu'un seul désir: V o i r, v o i r dans toute cette machinerie et alors crier dans tout le peuple! - Muni de deux références des deux employés de Gestapo, ayant traité mon cas, il n'était pas difficile d'entrer dans la SS armée. 10 mars à 2 juin 1941 instruction élémentaire du soldat à Hambourg-Langenhorn, Arnhem et Oranienburg avec 40 médecins. Pour mes doubles études - technique et médecine- je reçus l'ordre d'entrer au service médico-technique de SS-Ehrungshauptamt-service sanitaire de la SS armée - Amtgruppe D, Hygiène.- A ce lieu de service, je me choisis moi-même le devoir de construire aussitôt des appareils de désinfection et des filtres d'eau potable pour les troupes et pour les camps de prisonniers et de concentration. Pour connaissance exacte de l'industrie j'y réussis bientôt- mes prédécesseurs n'étant pas réussis. Ainsi, il fut possible d'abaisser le nombre des prisonniers morts considérablement.- Pour mes succès, bientôt je reçus le grade de Lieutenant.- Décembre 1941, le tribunal qui avait ordonné ma exclusion hors NSDAP reçut connaissance de ma entrée dans la SS armée. On faisait grandes efforts de me chasser et de me poursuivre. Mais pour mes succès on ne déclara sincère et indispensable.- Janvier 1942 je fus le chef du service technique de désinfection, contenant aussi le service des gaz à vénérements toxiques pour désinfection.- Le 8 juin 1942 il entra dans ma chambre de service le SS-Sturmbannführer G u o n t h e r du Reichs-Stabs-

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ReichsSicherheitsHauptamt, en civil, inconnu à moi. Il me donna l'ordre de procurer 100 kg d'acide prussique et d'aller avec lui à un lieu qui n'était pas connu qu'au chauffeur du camion. Nous partions à l'usine de potasse près de Collin (Prague). Le camion chargé nous partions à Lublin-Pologne. Nous prenions avec nous le professeur Dr. Méd. Pfannenstiel, ordinaris d'hygiène de l'université Marbourg/Lahn. — A Lublin, le SS-Gruppenführer Globocnik nous attend. Il nous dit : C'est une des plus secrètes choses qu'il y a, et même la plus secrète. Chacun, qui en parle, sera fusilé aussitôt. Hier, deux arleurs sont morts. Alors il nous expliqua : A l'instant, -17 août 1942- il y a 3 installations :

- 1.) Belzec, à la route Lublin-Lemberg, au secteur à la ligne de démarcation Russe. Maximum par jour 15.000 personnes. (vu !)
- 2.) Sobibor, je ne sais pas exactement, où pas vu. 20.000 pers. p. jour.
- 3.) Treblinka, 120 km NNE de Warszawa. 25.000 par jour. vu !
- 4.) Maidanek, près de Lublin, vu en préparation. —

— Globocnik dit : Il vous faudra faire la désinfection de très grandes quantités de vêtements, dix ou vingt fois le résultat de la "Spinnstoffsammlung", (collection des vêtements et textiles), qu'on ne fait que pour obscurcir la provenance des vêtements juifs, Polonais, Tchèques etc. — Votre autre devoir sera : de changer le service de nos chambres de gaz, maintenant fonctionnant par échappement d'un ancien moteur "Diesel", à une chose plus toxique et fonctionnant plus vite, c'est soit acide prussique. Mais le Führer et Himmler, qui étaient ici le 15 août — c'est avant-hier — m'ont obligés d'accompagner moi-même tous ceux qui doivent voir les installations. — Alors professeur Pfannenstiel : Mais qu'est-ce que dit le Führer ? — Alors Globocnik, maintenant Chef de Police et SS rivière Adriatique à Trieste : Plus vite, plus vite, réaliser toute l'action ! — dit-il. Lors le directeur du ministère Dr. Herbert Linde, ministère Intérieurs : "C'était-il pas meilleur de brûler les corps au lieu de les enterrer ? Une autre génération, peut-être, en penserait d'une autre manière." — Alors Globocnik : Mais messieurs, si jamais, après nous une génération si lâche, si carieuse, qu'elle ne comprenne pas notre oeuvre si bon, si nécessaire, alors — messieurs — tout le National-socialisme était pour rien. — Mais, au contraire, il faudrait enterrer des tables de bronze, auxquels il est inscrit, que c'étaient nous, nous, qui avons eu le courage de réaliser cet oeuvre gigantesque ! — Alors Hitler : Oui, mon brave Globocnik, c'est un mot, c'est aussi mon opinion ! —

— L'autre jour, nous partions à Belzec. Une petite gare spéciale de deux quais s'incline à la colline de sable jaune, immédiatement au Nord de la rue et du chemin de fer Lublin-Lemberg. Au Sud, près de la chaussée, quelques maisons du service avec l'affiche : "Lieu de service Belzec de la SS armée". — Globocnik me présente à SS-Hauptsturmführer Obermeyer de Pirmasens, qui me fit voir avec grande retenance les installations. Cet jour, on ne vit pas les morts, mais l'odeur de toute la région, aussi de la grande chaussée, était pestilente. A côté de la petite gare, il y avait une grande baraque "Garderobe" avec un guichet "Valours". — Alors, une chambre à 100 chaises "Coiffeurs". Alors un corridor de 150 mètres au plein vent, fils barbelés de deux côtés, et affiches : Aux bains et inhalations ! — Avant nous une maison comme institut de bain, à droite et à gauche grand pot de béton avec geranium ou autres fleurs. Après avoir monté un petit escalier, à droite et à gauche, trois et trois chambres comme de garages, 4 x 5 mètres, 1,90 mètre d'altitude. Au retour, pas visible, sorties de bois. Au toit, l'étoile de David en cuivre. — Avant le Bâtiment, inscription : "Fonction Keokenholt". — De plus — cet après-midi — je n'ai aperçu. — Autre matin, quelques minutes avant 7 heures, on m'annonça :

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Après dix minutes le premier train arrivera!—Vraiment, après quelques minutes le premier train arriva de Lemberg. 45 wagons, contenant 6.700 personnes, 1450 déjà morts à leur arrivée. Derrière les petites lucarnes aux fils barbelés des enfants, jeunes, pleins de peur, femmes, hommes. Le train arrive: 200 Ukrainiens, contraints à ce service, arrachés aux portes et, avec des crachats de cuir, ils chassent les personnes en dehors des voitures. Alors un grand parleur—haut donne les instructions: Au plein vent, quelques dans la baraque, se déshabiller de tout, vêtements, aussi prothèse et lunettes. Avec petit morceau de ficelle, offert par un petit garçon juif de 4 ans, joindre ensemble les chaussures. Rendre tout valeur, tout argent au guichet. Valeurs sans bon, sans reçu. Alors les femmes, les jeunes filles au coiffeur—faire couper à un ou deux coups les cheveux, qui disparaissent dans des grands sacs de pomme de terre pour en faire quelques choses spéciales pour les sous-marins, éraiseurs etc.— me dit le SS-Unterscharführer du service.— Alors, le marche commence: à droite, à gauche le fil barbelé, en derrière deux douzaines Ukrainiens avec fusil, Guidé d'une jeune fille extraordinairement belle, ils s'approchent. Moi même avec le Hauptmann Wirth, police, nous nous trouvons devant les chambres de la mort. Totalement nus, les hommes, les femmes, les jeunes filles, les enfants, les bébés, les à une seule jambe, tous nus, passent. Au coin, un SS fort, qui à haute voix pastorale dit aux pauvres: Il vous n'arrivera ni le moindre! Il ne vous faudra rien que vivement respirer, cela fait forts les poumons, cette inhalation, c'est nécessaire contre les maladies contagieuses, c'est une belle désinfection! — Demandé, quelle serait leur sort il leur dit: Vraiment, les hommes doivent travailler, bâtir des rues et des maisons. Mais les femmes ne sont pas obligées. Seulement si elles veulent elles peuvent aider au ménage ou dans la cuisine.— Pour quelques de ces pauvres gens petit espoir encore une fois, assez pour les faire marcher sans résistance aux chambres de la mort.— la majorité sait tout, l'odeur leur indique le sort!— Alors ils montent le petit escalier et—voient la vérité! Mères, nourrices, les bébés à la poitrine, nues, beaucoup d'enfants de tout âge— nus— ils hésitent, mais ils entrent dans les chambres de la mort, la plupart sans mot dire, poussés des autres derrière eux, agités par les crachats de SS.— Une juive, 40 ans environ, les yeux comme des flambeaux, ôte la sang de leur enfants sur leurs meurtriers. Recevant 5 coups de crachats au visage de part de Hauptmann de police Wirth lui même, elle disparaît dans la chambre de gaz. Beaucoup font leurs prières, d'autres disent: Qui est ce qui nous donne de l'eau pour la mort? (Rite israélitique?)— Dans les chambres, la SS presse les hommes. "Bien remplir"— le Hauptmann Wirth a ordonné. Les hommes nus sont debout aux pieds des autres, 700-800 à 25 mètres carrés, à 45 m cube!— Les portes se ferment. Cependant, le reste du train, nus, attendent. On me dit: aussi en hiver nus!— Mais ils se peuvent emporter la mort!— C'est pour cela, donc, qu'ils sont ici!— était la réponse!— A ce moment, je comprends pourquoi "Fondation Heckenholt".— Heckenholt, c'est le chauffeur du "Diesel", dont les échappements sont destinés à tuer les pauvres! SS-Unterscharführer Heckenholt se donne quelque peine pour faire en marche le moteur Diesel. Mais il ne marche pas! Le Hauptmann Wirth arrive. On voit, il a peur, parce que moi, je vois le désastre. Oui, je vois tout, et j'attends. Mon chronomètre "stop" a fixé tout. 50 minutes, 70 minutes,— le Diesel ne marche pas!— Les hommes attendent dans leurs chambres de gaz. En vain. On les écoute pleurer. "Comme à la synagogue"—dit le SS-Sturmabführer Professor Dr. Pfannenstiel, ordinaris de l'hygiène de l'université de Harbourg/Lahn, l'ordonne à la porte de bois. Le Hauptmann Wirth, furieux, fait 11, 12 coups de crachats au visage de l'Ukrainien, qui est en aide de Heckenholt.— Après deux heures 49 minutes— le montre stop a tout enregistré— le Diesel commence. Jusqu'à ce moment les hommes dans les 4 chambres déjà remplies vivent, vivent, 4 fois 750 personnes à 4 fois 45 mètre cube!— De nouve-

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25 minutes passent: Beaucoup, c'est vrai, sont morts. C'est ce qu'on voit par la petite fenêtre, par laquelle la lampe électrique fait voir pour un moment l'intérieur de la chambre. Après 28 minutes, encore peu qui survivent. Après 32 minutes, enfin, tout est mort! - De l'autre côté, des travailleurs juifs ouvrent les portes de bois. On leur a promis - pour leur service terrible - la liberté et quelques procents du résultat des valeurs et de l'argent trouvé. Comme les colonnes de Basalte les morts sont encore debout, étant pas la moindre place de tomber ou de s'incliner. Même morts, on connaît encore les familles, qui se serrent encore les mains. On a peine de les séparer, pour faire vides les chambres pour prochaine charge. On jette les corps, bleus, humides de sueur et de l'urin, les jambes pleins de crotte et de sang périodique. Parmi tous, les bébés, les cadavres des enfants. - Mais on n'a pas de temps! Deux douzaines de travailleurs s'occupent de contrôler les bouches, qu'ils ouvrent par moyen des crochets de fer. "Or à gauche, sans or à droite!" - D'autres contrôlent anus et génitaux pour monnaie, brillants, or etc. - Des dentistes arrachent par moyen de martels les dents d'or, ponts, couronnes. Parmi tous, le hauptmann Wirth. Il est à son élément, se prêtant une grande boîte de conserves, remplie de dents, il me dit: Epruvez vous même le poids de l'or! C'est seulement d'hier et d'avant-hier! - Et vous ne croyez pas ce que nous trouvons par jour! Les dollars, les brillants, l'or!! - Mais voyez vous même: - Alors il me guida à un bijoutier, qui avait la responsabilité de tous ces valeurs. - On me fit voir encore un des ~~xxx~~ chefs du grand magasin de l'ouest, Berlin, Kaufhaus des Westens et un petit homme, qu'on faisait jouer le violon, chefs du commando travailleurs juifs. "C'est un capitaine de l'armée K et K Autriche, chevalier du Croix de fer Allemand I Classe - me dit le Hauptsturmfuehrer Obermeyer. - Alors les corps nus furent jetés dans des grandes fossées de 100 x 20 x 12 mètres environ, situés auprès des chambres de la mort. - Après quelques jours, les corps se gonflaient et le tout s'élevait de 2-3 mètres par moyen de gaz, qui se formait dans les cadavres. Après quelques jours, le gonflement fini, les corps tombaient ensemble. Autre jour les fossées furent remplies de nouveau et couvertes de 10 cm de sable. - Quelque temps plus tard - j'ai souuté - on a fait des grilles de rail de chemin de fer et a brûlé les cadavres par moyen de l'huile Diesel et de l'essence, pour faire disparaître les cadavres. A Belzec et à Treblinca, on n'est pas se donné la peine de compter d'une manière quelquement exacte le nombre des hommes tués. Les nombres, faits connu par British Broadcasting Co - Radio sans fil sont pas justes, en vérité il s'agira ces ensemble de 25.000.000 hommes! Pas juifs, seulement, mais en préférence des Polonais et Tchèques biologiquement sans valeurs selon opinion des Nazis. La plupart et morte anonyme. Des commissions de Pseudo-médecins, simples jeunes SS à manteaux blancs et limousines, parcourent les villages et ville de Pologne et Tchécoslovaquie pour désigner les vieux, phthisiques, malades pour quelque temps plus tard, les faire disparaître aux chambres de gaz. C'étaient les Polonais, les Tchèques de la Rô. III, qui n'étaient pas encore dignes de vivre pour ne pouvoir pas encore travailler. - Le hauptmann de police Wirth me pria de pas proposer à Berlin quelconque autre méthode des chambres de gaz et de laisser tout comme qu'il était. - Je mentis - ce que j'avais fait à tout cas - que l'acide prussique était déjà détruite par le transport et devenue très dangereuse. Alors je serai forcé de l'enterrer - que se fit aussitôt. - Autre jour nous allions à par l'auto de hauptmann Wirth à Treblinca: 120 km environ NNE de Warszawa. L'institution de ce lieu de la mort était presque la même comme à Belzec, mais plus grande encore. 8 chambres de gaz et vrais montagnes de vêtements et de linge, 35 - 40 m environ d'altitude. Alors, à notre "honneur" on fit un banquet avec tous les employés de l'institut. Le obersturmbannfuhrer professeur Dr. méd. Pfannenstiel, ordinaris d'hygiène de l'université de Marbourg Lahn, fit un sermon: Votre oeuvre c'est un grand devoir et un devoir si utile et si

5. Kurt Gerslein (26 avril 1945.

nécessaire. En moi seul il parlait de cet institut comme de "beauté du travail, et d'une chose humaine. A tous. Si-l-on voit les corps des juifs on comprend la grandeur de votre bon oeuvre !- Le din- lui même était simple, mais, selon l'ordre de Himmler, les occu- pés de ce service recevaient ce qu'ils voulaient de beurre, viande, alcool etc. -Au congé, on nous offra plusieurs kilos de beurre et grande nombre de bouteilles de Liqueur. J'avais peine de ment d'avoir assez de tout de notre ferme. Pour cette raison, Pfannen- etiel prit encore sa portion. -Nous allions par l'auto à Warszawa. Attendant en vain un lit libre, je rencontrais le secrétaire de la légation Suède, M. le baron de Otter. Tous les lits occu- pés nous passions la nuit au corridor du wagon lit. Là, sous l'impression récente j'ai lui raconté tout avec la prière de référer tout à son gouvernement et aux tous alliés. Il me de- manda une référence de moi. J'ai lui donné comme telle l'adresse de M. le Generalsuperintendent D. Otto Dibelius, Berlin-Lichter- felde West, Bruederweg 2, ami de Martin Niemöller et chef de la résistance protestantique contre le nazisme. Après quelques semaines j'ai vu encore deux fois le baron de Otter. Il me dit qu'il avait fait son rapport au gouvernement Suède, un rapport, qui, selon ses mots, a eu grande influence aux relations de Suède et d'Allemagne. La tentative de référer tout cela au chef de la légation du Saint-Père, n'a pas eu grand succès. On me demanda si j'étais soldat. Alors on me refusa tout entretien. Alors j'ai fait un référent détaillé au secrétaire de l'épiscopat de Berlin M. le Dr. Winter pour référer tout cela à son évêque de Berlin et ainsi à la légation du Saint-Père. -Sortant de la légation du Saint-Père à la Rauchstrasse à Berlin, j'avais un rencontre dangereux à un agent de police, qui me poursuivait, mais, après quelques minutes très désagréables, me fit échapper.

Il me faut encore ajouter que le SS-Sturmabführer Guenther du Reichssicherheitshauptamt demanda de moi, le commencement 1944, de très grandes fournitures d'acide prussique pour un destin obscur. L'acide devait être fourni à Berlin, Kurfuer- stenstrasse à son lieu de service. Je réussis à lui faire croire que cela n'était pas possible pour les grands dangers. Il n'agit de plusieurs wagons d'acide toxique, assez pour tuer beaucoup d'hommes, des millions! Il m'avait dit qu'il n'était pas sûr, si, quand, pour quel cercle de personnes, de quelle manière, on aurait besoin de ce poison. Je ne sais pas exactement quelque ait été l'intention de Reichssicherheitshauptamt et du S D. Mais j'ai, plus tard, pensé aux mots de Goebbels de "fermer les portes derrière eux, si le nazisme ne réussirait jamais. Peut être qu'ils voulaient tuer une grande partie du peuple Allemand, peut être les tra- vailleurs étrangers, peut être les prisonniers de guerre. - Je ne sais pas! A tout cas, j'ai fait disparaître l'acide aussitôt après son arrivée pour devoirs de désinfection. C'était quelque- ment dangereux pour moi, mais si-l-on m'avait demandé ou se trouvaient l'acide toxique, j'aurais répondu: Elle était déjà en état de dissolution dangereux, et c'est pour cela qu'il fallait la consommer pour la désinfection !- Je suis sûr, que Guenther, le fils du Rasen-Guenther selon ses propres mots, avait l'ordre de procurer l'acide pour éventuellement tuer millions d'hommes, peut être aussi dans les camps de concentra- tion. J'ai sur moi les notes de 2.175 kg, mais en vérité il s'agit de ca 8.500 kgs, assez pour tuer millions d'hommes. J'ai fait écrire à mon nom les notes pour comme j'ai dit- discrétion, en vérité pour être quelquelement libre dans les dispositions et pour mieux faire disparaître l'acide toxique. Je n'ai jamais payé ces livraisons pour éviter le rembourse-

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ment et de rappeler le SD à cet stock. Le directeur de la Dögech, qui avait fait cette fourniture, m'a dit qu'il a fourni pour tuer des hommes acide prussique en ampoules. — Une autre fois, Günther me consulta s'il était possible de tuer grand nombre des juifs au plein vent des fossés de fortification de Maria-Theresienstadt. Pour empêcher ce conseil diabolique je déclarais impossible cette méthode. Quelque temps plus tard j'ai écouté que le SD s'était procuré d'une autre manière l'acide prussique pour tuer ces pauvres hommes à Theresienstadt. — Les champs de concentration les plus détestables n'étaient pas Oranienburg ni Dachau ni Belzen — mais Auschwitz (Oswiec) et Mauthausen-Gusen près de Linz/Donau. C'est là que sont disparus des millions d'hommes aux chambres de gaz, à des juifs comme chambres gaz. La méthode de tuer les enfants était de leur tenir sous le nez un tampon à l'acide prussique.

J'ai vu — moi-même — des expériences continuées jusqu'à la mort avec personnes vivantes aux champs de concentration. Ainsi, le SS-Hauptsturmführer Gundlach, Ir.med., a fait tels expériences au champs de concentration pour femmes à Ravensbrück près de Fuerstenberg-Mecklenburg. J'ai vu beaucoup de réformats — à son lieu de service — de tels expériences à Buchenwald, par exemple expériences jusqu'à 100 tablettes de *Perivitine* par jour. D'autres expériences — toute fois 100-200 personnes — sont faits jusqu'à la mort avec sérum, lympho etc. Finalement lui-même s'était réservé la permission de tels expériences.

Un jour, à Oranienbourg, champs de concentration, j'ai vu disparaître, un seul jour, tous les prisonniers, étant le pour être perverses (homosexuels).

J'ai évité de visiter souvent les champs de concentration, parcequ'il était usuel — en préférence à Mauthausen Gusen — près de Linz — de pendre à l'honneur des visiteurs un ou deux prisonniers. À Mauthausen, il était usuel de faire travailler les juifs à une carrière de grande altitude. Après quelques temps les SS du service dirent : attention, après quelques minutes il y aura quelque malheur! Vraiment, une ou deux minutes plus tard, quelques juifs furent précipités de la carrière, tombants morts à nos pieds. "Accidents de travail" — on registrerait aux papiers des tués. — Le Dr. Fritz Krantz, ancien SS-Hauptsturmführer m'a souvent raconté de telles choses, qu'il confirmait vivement et publiait souvent. —

Les crimes dé couverts à Belzen, Oranienbourg etc. sont pas considérables en comparaison des autres, qui sont faits à Auschwitz et à Mauthausen.

J'ai le dessein d'écrire un livre contenant mes aventures avec les nazies.

Je suis prêt de prêter un serment que tous mes déclarations sont totalement vrais.

Kurt Gerstein

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A mes appartements à Berlin W 35, Buelowstrasse 47 I gauche j'avais autour de moi un cercle d'antnazis. Voilà quelques noms des membres :

Major Lutz Reiss, maintenant Hambourg, Fa. Glasurit-Werke.
Dr. Felix Buss, Justitiar en chef de Telefunken, Berlin SW 11,
Fallesches Ufer 30.

Direktor Alex Kenne, Hambourg, Glasurit-Werke
Msr. le curé Buchholz, curé de prison Ploetzensee, qui a accompagné à la mort les officiers du 20 Juillet 1944 à Cohnsland. Ces officiers comme le curé Martin Niemöller, mon ami cordial, fumait les cigarettes et les cigares que moi leur ai fournis à leur prison.

Msr. le curé Kocholski, remplaçant Msr. le curé Martin Niemöller à Dahlen, Annen-Kirche.

Dorothea Schulz, secrétaire de Msr. le Curé Martin Niemöller
Frau Arndt, Secrétaire de Msr. le curé Martin Niemöller de Hachen

Emil Nieuwenhuisen et son ami Hendrik, de Philipps-Byndhoven, déportés, que j'avais rencontrés à l'église et qui étaient, depuis longtemps, deux ou trois fois par semaine mes hôtes pour manger et écouter t.s.f.

Direkteur Hansen, Berlin NW 7, Mittelstrasse, Imprimerie Francke
Herbert Scharkowsky, rédacteur, Scharl-Pressen

Hauptmann Nebelthaus et son mari, Berlin, maintenant à Kirchentel
Linsfurt-Württemberg

Dr. Hermann Ehlers, Syndicus de l'église Niemöller de résistance antinazie

Dr. Ebbo Elias, même comme Dr. Ehlers.

Autres références : General Superintendent D. Otto Dibelius, Chef de la résistance de l'église contre le nazisme.

Msr. le curé Rehling, Hagen Westphalie, résistance de l'église de Westphalie, activiste.

Praeses Dr. Koch, Bad Oeynhausen, de même.

Baron von Huen, Professor de l'université de Tuebingen, antinazi

Bernhard J. Goedecker, Fabrikant, München, Tislianstrasse. Antinazie

Directeur Franz Bäuerle, München, Siemensstrasse 17. antinazie.

Msr. le curé catholique Valperts, Hagen Westphalie.

Msr. le curé Otto Vehr, Sarrebruck

Msr. les curés Schläeger et Bittkau, Neuruppin près de Berlin.

August Franz et toute famille, grands antnazis, Sarrebruck, maintenant à Talsheim-Württemberg.

Msr. le Docteur Straub, Metzingen-Württemberg et famille.

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z.Zt. Rottweil, den 4. Mai 1945.

Zur Person : Kurt Gerstein, Bergassessor ausser Dienst, Diplomingenieur.
am 27. September 1936 wegen staatsfeindlicher Betätigung aus dem
Höheren Preussischen Berg-Dienst entfernt.
geboren am 11. August 1905 zu Münster/Westfalen. - Teilhaber der Maschi-
nenfabrik Do Limon Fluhne & Co zu Düsseldorf, Industriestrasse 1-17.
s. Zielfabrik für automatische Schmieranlagen für Lokomotiven, Knorr
und Westinghouse-Bremsen.
Vater: Landgerichtspräsident Ludwig E. Gerstein, Landgerichtspräsi-
dent in Hagen/Westf. ausser Diensten.
Mutter: Clara Gerstein geb. Schmemann, gestorben 1931.
Verheiratet seit 1937 mit Elfriede B e n s e n in Tübingen, Garten-
strasse 24. Drei Kinder : Arnulf 5 Jahre, Adelheid 3 1/2 Jahre Olaf
2 Jahre.

2.) Lebenslauf: 1905-1910 in Münster Westf. 1910-1919 in Saarbrücken.
1919-1921 Halberstadt, 1921-1925 Neuruppin bei Berlin. Dort 1925 Abi-
tur am humanistischen Gymnasium. Studien: Universität Marburg/Lahn 1922
-1927, Berlin 1927-1931, Technische Hochschule Aachen 1927. Diplom-
ingenieur-Examen 1931 in Berlin-Charlottenburg. - Seit 1925 aktives
Mitglied der organisierten evangelischen Jugend (CVJM, = YMCA und der
Bibelkreise an Höheren Schulen. - Politische Betätigung : Aktiver
Anhänger von Brüning und Stresemann. - Seit Juni 1933 von der Gestapo
verfolgt wegen christlicher Betätigung gegen den Nazie-Staat. - Am
2. Mai 1933 Eintritt in die NSDAP, am 2. Oktober 1936 Ausschluss
aus der NSDAP wegen staatsfeindlicher (religiöser) Betätigung
für die Bekenntnis-Kirche. Gleichzeitig Ausschluss als Beamter aus
dem Staatsdienst. - Am 30. Januar 1935 wegen Störung einer Partei-
Weihfeier im Stadttheater Hagen Westfalen - Aufführung des Dramas
Wittkind - öffentlich verprügelt und verletzt. - Am 27. Oktober
1935 Bergassessor-Examen vor dem Wirtschaftsministerium in Berlin,
sämtliche Examen mit Prädikat. Bis zur Verhaftung am 27. September 36
Staatsbeamter der Saargruben-Verwaltung in Saarbrücken. Diese erste
Verhaftung erfolgte wegen Versendung von 8500 staats(naz e-)feind-
licher Broschüren an sämtliche Ministerialdirektoren und hohen

3.) Justizbeamten in Deutschland. - Einem Lieblingsmusee entsprechend studierte ich wiederum in Tübingen am Deutschen Institut für Ärztliche Mission Medizin. Dies wurde mir durch meine wirtschaftliche Unabhängigkeit ermöglicht. Als Teilhaber der Firma Leo Limon Fluhme & Co. in Düsseldorf bezog ich ein durchschnittliches Einkommen von jährlich 18.000.-Reichsmark. Etwa ein Drittel dieses Einkommens pflegte ich für meine religiösen Ideale auszugeben. Insbesondere habe ich rund 230.000 religiöse und nazifeindliche Broschüren drucken lassen und dieselben auf meine Kosten an Interessenten versandt.

Am 14. Juli 1938 erfolgte meine zweite Verhaftung und Einlieferung in das Konzentrationslager Wolzheim wegen staatsfeindlicher Betätigung. Ich wurde vorher häufig von der Gestapo verwarnt und verhört und bin mit einem Redeverbot für das ganze Reichsgebiet belegt worden.

Als ich von der beginnenden Umbringung der Geisteskranken in Grafeneck und Hadamar und andernorts hörte, beschloss ich auf jeden Fall den Versuch zu machen, in diese Öfen und Kammern hineinzuschauen um zu wissen, was dort geschieht. Dies um so mehr, als

4.) als eine angeheiratete Schwägerin-Bertha Ebeling- in Hadamar ~~am~~ zwangsgetötet wurde. Mit zwei Referenzen der Gestapobeamten, die meine Sachen bearbeiteten, gelang es mir unschwer, in die SS einzutreten. Die Herren waren der Ansicht, dass mein Idealismus, den sie wohl bewunderten, der Nazie-Sache zugutekommen müsste.- Am 10. März 1941 trat ich in die SS ein. Ich erhielt meine Grundausbildung in Kamburg-Langenhoorn, in Arnhem -Holland und in Oranienburg. In Holland nahm ich sofort die Fühlung mit der holländischen Widerstandsbewegung auf (Diplomingenieur Ubbink, Doesburg). Wegen meines Doppelstudiums wurde ich bald in den technisch-ärztlichen Dienst übernommen und dem SS-Führungshauptamt, Amtgruppe D-Sanitätswesen der Waffen-SS, Abteilung Hygiene, zugeteilt. Die Ausbildung machte ich mit einem Ärzte-Kursus von 40 Ärzten.- Beim Hygienedienst konnte ich mir meine Tätigkeit selbst bestimmen. Ich konstruierte fahrbare und ortsfeste Desinfektionsanlagen für die Truppe, für Gefangenenlager und Konzentrationslager. Hiermit hatte ich unverdientermassen grosse Erfolge und wurde von da ab für eine Art technisches Genie gehalten. In der Tat gelang es wenigstens, die schreckliche Fleckfieberwelle von 1941 in den Lagern einiger

5.) müssen einzuordnen. Wegen meiner Erfolge wurde ich bald 146
Leutnant und Oberleutnant.- Weihnachten 1941 erhielt das Gericht,
das meinen Ausschluss aus der NSDAP verfügt hatte, Kenntnis von
meinem Eintritt in die SS an führender Stelle. Es folgte ein star-
kes Kesseltreiben gegen mich. Aber wegen meiner grossen Erfolge und
wegen meiner Persönlichkeit wurde ich von meiner Dienststelle
geschützt und gehalten. Im Januar 1942 wurde ich Abteilungsleiter
der Abteilung Gesundheitstechnik und gleichzeitig in Doppelstel-
lung für den gleichen Sektor vom Reichsarzt SS und Polizei
übernommen. Ich übernahm in dieser Eigenschaft den ganzen techni-
schen Desinfektionsdienst einschliesslich der Desinfektion mit
hochgiftigen Gasen.

In dieser Eigenschaft erhielt ich am 8. Juni 1942 Besuch von dem mi-
bis dahin unbekannten SS-Sturmabführer G u n t h e r vom
Reichssicherheitshauptamt, Berlin W, Kurfürstenstrasse. Günther kam
in Zivil. Er gab mir den Auftrag, sofort für einen äusserst ge-
heimen Reichs-Auftrag 100 kg. Blausäure zu beschaffen und mit
dieser mit einem Auto zu einem unbekannten Ort zu fahren, der nur
dem Fahrer des Wagens bekannt sei. Wir fuhren alsdann einige Wochen

6.) später nach Prag. Ich konnte mir ungefähr die Art des Auftra-
ges denken, übernahm ihn aber, weil mir hier durch Zufall sich
eine von mir seit langem ersuchte Gelegenheit ergab, in diese
Dinge hineinzuschauen. Auch war ich als Sachverständiger für Blau-
säure so autoritär und kompetent, dass es mir auf jeden Fall ein
Leichtes sein musste, die Blausäure unter irgend einem Vorwand
als untauglich- weil zersetzt oder dergl.- zu bezeichnen und ihre
Anwendung für den eigentlichen Tötungszweck zu verhindern. Mit
uns fuhr noch -mehr zufällig- der Professor Dr. med. Pfannenstiel,
SS-Obersturmbannführer, Ordinarius der Hygiene an der Universität
Marburg-Lahn. Wir fuhren alsdann mit dem Wagen nach Lublin, wo er
der SS-Gruppenführer Globocnik erwartete. In der Fabrik in Colic
hatte ich absichtlich durchblicken lassen, dass die Säure für
die Tötung von Menschen bestimmt sei. Prompt erschien dannach
nachmittags ein Mensch, der sich sehr stark für das Fahrzeug
interessierte und, als er bemerkt wurde, in rasender Fahr floh.
-Globocnik sagte: Diese ganze Angelegenheit ist eine der geheis-
sten Sachen, die es zurzeit überhaupt gibt, man kann sagen die
geheimste. Wer darüber spricht, wird auf der Stelle erschossen.

7.) Erst gestern seien zwei Schützler erschossen worden..-Dann erklärte er uns : Im Augenblick- das war am 17.August 1942- haben wir drei Anstalten in Betrieb, nämlich :

1.) Belzec, an der Chaussee und Bahnstrecke Lublin-Lemberg an der Schnittlinie mit der Demarkationslinie mit Russland.Höchstleistung pro Tag 15.000 Personen.

2.) Sobibor. Auch in Polen, ich weiss nicht genau wo. 20000 Personen Höchstleistung pro Tag.

3.)Treblinka, 120 km nordnordöstlich von Warschau.Höchstleistung 25.000 Personen pro Tag.

4.)-Babals in Vorbereitung- Maidanek bei Lublin.

Belzec, Treblinka und Maidanek habe ich persönlich eingehend mit dem Leiter dieser Anstalten, dem Polizeihauptmann Wirth zusammen besichtigt.

Globocnik wendete sich ausschliesslich an mich und sagte: Es ist Ihre Aufgabe, insbesondere die Desinfektion des sehr umfangreichen Textilgutes durchzuführen.Die ganze Spinnstoffsammlung ist doch nur durchgeführt worden, um die Herkunft des Bekleidungsmaterials für die Gefangenen usw. zu erklären und als ein Ergebnis des Opfers des Deutschen Volkes darzustellen. In Wirklichkeit ist das Aufkommen unserer Anstalten das 10-20 fache der ganzen Spinnstoffsammlung.

7.) *(Hier folgen Zettel:)* *(mitten leistungsfähigen Firmen)*
Ich habe abgemacht die Möglichkeit, solche Textilmengen, es handelt sich allein um einen aufzupumpen Vorrat von etwa 40 Millionen kg- in den vorhandenen Wäschereien und Desinfektionsanstalten zu desinfizieren, durchgesprochen. Es war aber völlig unmöglich, so grosse Stoffmengen unterzubringen. Ich benutzte alle diese Verhandlungen, um die Tatsache der Juden tötung in geschickter Weise bekannt zu machen und durchblicken zu lassen. -Es genügte Globocnik alsdann, das das ganze Zeug mit etwas befeuchteter überprüfte wurde; damit es weniger stark nach Desinfektion rochen. Das ist dann auch geschehen.

8.) -Ihr: Andere - noch weit wichtigere Aufgabe ist die Umstellung unserer Gaskammern, die jetzt mit Dioxidauspuffgasen arbeiten, auf eine bessere und schnellere Sache. Ich denke da vor allem an Blausäure. Vorgestern waren der Führer und Himmler hier. Auf ihre Anweisung muss ich Sie persönlich dorthin bringen, ich soll niemand schriftliche Bescheinigungen und Einlasskarten ausstellen.-Darauf fragte Pfannenstiel: Was hat denn der Führer gesagt?-- Glob.: Schneller, schneller die ganze Aktion durchführen. Sein Begleiter, der Ministerialrat Dr. Herbert Lindner hat dann gefragt: Herr Globocner, halten Sie es für gut und richtig, die ganzen Leichen zu vergraben, anstatt sie zu verbrennen? Nach uns könnte eine Generation kommen, die das ganze nicht versteht!- Darauf Glob.: Meine Herren, wenn je nach uns eine Generation kommen sollte, die so schlapp und so knochenweich ist, dass sie unsere grosse Aufgabe nicht versteht, dann allerdings ist der ganze Nationalsozialismus umsonst gewesen. Ich bin im Gegenteil der Ansicht, dass man Bronzetafeln versenken sollte, auf denen festgehalten ist, dass wir, wir den Mut gehabt haben, dieses grosse und so notwendige Werk durchzuführen.- Darauf der Führer: Gut, Globocner, das ist allerdings auch meine Ansicht!- Später hat sich

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9.) die andere Ansicht durchgesetzt. Die Leichen sind dann auf grossen Rosten, die aus Eisenbahnschienen improvisiert wurden, verbrannt worden unter Zuhilfenahme von Benzin und Dieselöl. Am anderen Tage fahren wir nach Belzec. Ein kleiner Spezialbahnhof ~~war~~ war zu diesem Zweck an einem Hügel hart nördlich der Chaussee Lublin-Lemberg im linken Winkel der Demarkationslinie geschaffen worden. Südlich der Chaussee einige Häuser mit der Inschrift "Sonderkommando Belzec der Waffen-SS". Da der eigentliche Chef der gesamten Tötungsanlagen, der Polizeihauptmann Wirth, noch nicht da war, stellte Globocner mich dem SS-Hauptsturmführer Obermeyer (aus Pirmasens) vor. Dieser liess mich an jenem Nachmittag nur das sehen, was er mir eben zeigen musste. Ich sah an diesem Tage keine Toten, nur der Geruch der ganzen Gegend im heissen August war pestilenzartig, und Millionen von Fliegen waren überall zugegen.- Dicht bei dem kleinen 2-gleisigen Bahnhof war eine grosse Baracke, die sogenannte Garderobe, mit einem grossen Wertsachen-Schalter. Dann folgte ein Zimmer mit etwa 100 Stühlen, der Friseurraum. Dann eine kleine Allee im Freien unter Birken, rechts und links von doppeltem Stacheldraht umzäunt, mit Inschriften: Zu den Inhalier- und Baderäumen!-

10.)

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Vor uns eine Art Badehaus, rechts und links davor grosse Betonbänke mit Geranien, dann ein Treppchen, und dann rechts und links je 3 Räume 5 x 5 Meter, 1,90 m hoch, mit Holztüren wie Garagen. An der Rückwand, in der Dunkelheit nicht recht sichtbar, grosse hölzerne Klapptüren. Auf dem Dach als "sinniger kleiner Scherz" der Davidstern!! - Vor dem Bauwerk eine Inschrift: Hebräisch - Holt - Stiftung! - Mehr habe ich an jenem Nachmittag nicht sehen können. - Am anderen Morgen um kurz vor sieben Uhr kündigt man an: In zehn Minuten kommt der erste Transport! - Tatsächlich nach einigen Minuten der erste Zug von Lemberg aus an. 45 Waggon mit 6.700 Menschen, von denen 1450 schon tot waren bei ihrer Ankunft. Hinter den vergitterten Luken schauen, entsetzlich bleich und Angstlich, Kinder durch, die Augen voll Todesangst, ferner Männer und Frauen. Der Zug fährt ein: 200 Ukrainer reissen die Türen auf und peitschen die Leute mit ihren Lederpeitschen aus den Waggonen heraus. Ein grosser Lautsprecher gibt die weiteren Anweisungen: Sich ganz ausziehen, auch Prothesen, Brillen usw. Die Wertsachen am Schalter abgeben, ohne Bons oder Quittung. Die Schuhe sorgfältig zusammenbinden (wegen der Spinnstoffsammlung.)

11.) denn in dem Haufen von reichlich 25 Meter Höhe hätte sonst niemand die zugehörigen Schuhe wieder zusammenfinden können. Dann die Frauen und jungen Mädchen zum Friseur, der mit zwei, drei Scherenschlägen die ganzen Haare abschneidet und sie in Kartoffelsäcken verschwinden lässt! Das ist für irgendwelche Spezialzwecke für die Uboote bestimmt, für Dichtungen oder dergleichen! - sagt mir der SS-Unterscharführer, der dort Dienst tut. - Dann setzt sich der Zug der Menschen in Bewegung. Voran ein bildhübsches junges Mädchen, so gehen sie die Allee entlang, alle nackt, Männer, Frauen, Kinder, ohne Prothesen. Ich selbst stehe mit dem Hauptmann Wirth oben auf der Rampe zwischen den Kammern. Mütter mit ihren Säuglingen an der Brust, sie kommen herauf, zögern, tröten ein in die Todeskammern! - An der Ecke steht ein starker SS-Mann, der mit pastoraler Stimme zu den Armen sagt: Es passiert euch nicht das geringste! Ihr müsst nur in den Kammern tief Atem holen, das weitet die Lungen, diese Inhalation ist notwendig wegen der Krankheiten und Seuchen. Auf die Frage, was mit ihnen geschehen würde, antwortet er: Ja natürlich, die Männer müssen arbeiten, Häuser und Chaussees bauen, aber die Frauen brauchen nicht zu arbeiten. Nur wenn sie wollen, können sie im Haushalt oder in der Küche mithelfen. - Für einige von diesen Armen ein klei-

12.) Der Hoffnungsschimmer, der ausreicht, dass sie ohne Widerstand die paar Schritte zu den Kammern gehen- die Mehrzahl weiss Bescheid, der Geruch kündigt ihnen ihr Los! - So steigen sie die kleine Treppe hinauf- und dann sehen sie alles. Mütter mit Kindern an der Brust, kleine, nackte Kinder, Erwachsene, Männer und Frauen, alle nackt- sie zögern- aber sie treten in die Totenkammern, von den anderen hinter ihnen vorgetrieben oder von den Loderpeitschen der SS getrieben. Die Mehrzahl, ohne ein Wort zu sagen. Eine Jüdin von etwa 40 Jahren mit flammenden Augen ruft das Blut, das hier vergossen wird, über die Mörder. Sie erhält 5 oder 6 Schläge mit der Reitpeitsche in's Gesicht, vom Hauptmann Wirth persönlich, - dann verschwindet auch sie in der Kammer. - Viele Menschen beten. Ich bete mit ihnen, ich drücke mich in eine Ecke und schreie laut zu meinem und ihrem Gott. Wie gern wäre ich mit ihnen in die Kammern gegangen, wie gern wäre ich ihren Tod mitgestorben. Sie hätten dann einen uniformierten SS-Offizier in ihren Kammern gefunden- die Sache wäre als Unglücksfall aufgefasst und behandelt worden und sang- und klanglos verschollen. Noch also darf ich nicht, ich muss noch zuvor künden, was ich hier erlebe! - Die Kammern füllen sich. Gut vollpacken, - so hat es der Hauptmann Wirth befohlen. Die Men-

13.) Menschen stehen einander auf den Füßen, 700-800 auf 25 Quadratmetern, in 45 Kubikmetern! Die SS zwingt sie physisch zusammen, soweit es überhaupt geht. - Die Türen schliessen sich. Währenddessen warten die anderen draussen im Freien, nackt. Man sagt mir: auch im Winter genau so! - Ja, aber sie können sich ja den Tod holen! sage ich. - Ja grad für das sinn es ja dohl! - sagt mir ein SS-Mann darauf in seinem Platt. - Jetzt endlich verstehe ich auch, warum die ganze Einrichtung "Heckenholt-Stiftung" heisst. Heckenholt ist der Chauffeur des Dieselmotors, ein kleiner Techniker, gleichzeitig der Erbauer der Anlage. Mit den Dieselauspuffgasen sollen die Menschen zu Tode gebracht werden. Aber der Diesel funktioniert nicht! Der Hauptmann Wirth kommt. Man sieht, es ist ihm peinlich, dass es gerade heute passieren muss, wo ich hier bin. Jawohl, ich sehe alles! und ich warte. Meine Stoppuhr hat alles brav registriert. 50 Minuten 70 Minuten- der Diesel springt nicht an! Die Menschen warten in ihren Gaskammern. Vergeblich. Man hört sie weinen, schluchzen. "Wie in der Synagoge" bemerkt der Professor Pfannenstiel, das Ohr an der Holztür. Der Hauptmann Wirth schlägt mit seiner Reitpeitsche dem Ukrainer, der dem Unterscharführer Heckenholt beim Diesel helfen soll, 12, 13 mal in's Gesicht. Nach 2 Stunden 49 Minuten- die Stoppuhr hat alles wohl registriert! - springt der Diesel an. Bis zu diesem Augenblick leben

14.) leben die Menschen in diesen 4 Kammern, 4 mal 750 Menschen in 4 mal 45 Kubikmetern!- Von neuem verstreichen 25 Minuten. Richtig, viele sind jetzt tot. Man sieht das durch das kleine Fensterchen, in dem das elektrische Licht die Kammer einen Augenblick beleuchtet. Nach 28 Minuten leben nur noch wenige. Endlich, nach 32 Minuten ist alles tot!- Von der anderen Seite öffnen Männer vom Arbeitskommando die Holztüren. Man hat ihnen- selbst Juden- die Freiheit versprochen und einen gewissen Promillesatz von allen gefundenen Werten für ihren schrecklichen Dienst. Wie Basaltsäulen stehen die Toten aufrecht aneinandergedrückt in den Kammern. Es wäre auch kein Platz, hinzufallen oder auch nur sich vornüber zu neigen. Selbst im Tode noch kennt man die Familien. Sie drücken sich, im Tode verkrampft, noch die Hände, so dass man Mühe hat, sie auseinander zu reißen, um die Kammern für die nächste Charge freizumachen. Man wirft die Leichen- nass von Schweiß und Urin, kotbeschmutzt, Menstruationsblut an den Beinen, heraus. Kinderleichen fliegen durch die Luft. Man hat keine Zeit, die Reittseilsachen der Ukrainer sausen auf die Arbeitskommandos. Zwei Dutzend Zahnärzte öffnen mit Haken den Mund und schauen nach Gold. Gold links, ohne Gold rechts. Andere Zahnärzte brechen mit Zangen und Hämmern die Goldzähne und Kronen aus den Kiefern.

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15.) Unter allen springt der Hauptmann Wirth herum. Er ist in seinem Element.-Einige Arbeiter kontrollieren Genitalien und After nach Gold, Brillanten und Wertsachen.-Wirth ruft mich heran: Heben Sie mal diese Konservenbüchse mit Goldzähnen, das ist nur von gestern und vorgestern! In einer unglaublich gewöhnlichen und falsch-zehnen Sprechweise sagt er zu mir: Sie glauben garnicht, was wir jeden Tag finden an Gold und Brillanten- er sprach es mit 2 L - und Dollár. Aber schauen Sie selbst.- Und nun führte er mich zu einem Juwelier, der alle diese Schätze zu verwalten hatte und liess mich dies alles sehen. - Man zeigte mir dann noch einen früheren Chef des Kaufhaus des Westens in Berlin und einen Geiger: Das ist ein Hauptmann von der alten Kaiserlich-Königlich Österreichischen Armee, Ritter des Eisernen Kreuzes I. Klasse, der jetzt Lager-ältester beim jüdischen Arbeitskommando ist!-Die nackten Leichen wurden auf Holztragen nur wenige Meter weit in Gruben von 100 x 20 x 12 Meter geschleppt. Nach einigen Tagen gärten die Leichen hoch und fielen alsdann kurze Zeit später stark zusammen, so dass man eine neue Schicht auf dieselben draufwerfen konnte. Dann wurde 10 cm Sand darüber gestreut, so dass nur noch vereinzelt Köpfe und Arme herausragten. Ich sah an einer solchen Stelle Juden in den

16.) Gräbern auf den Leichen heranklettern und arbeiten. "Lag sagte mir, dass verschnettlich die tot Angekommenen eines Transportes nicht entkleidet worden seien. Dies müsse natürlich wegen der Spinnstoffe und Wertsachen, die sie sonst mit in's Grab nehmen, nachgeholt werden. - Weder in Belzec noch in Treblinka hat man sich irgendeine Mühe gegeben, die Getöteten zu registrieren oder zu zählen. Die Zahlen waren nur Schätzungen nach dem Waggoninhalt. - Ausserden Juden aus aller europäischen Herren Ländern wurden insbesondere Tschechen und Polen Nr. III in den Gaskammern getötet. Kommissionen von SS-Männern - teils nicht einmal mit kompletter Volksschulbildung - führen mit feinen Limousinen und ärztlichem Gerät in weissen Mänteln von Dorf zu Dorf, liessen die Bevölkerung vorbeifilieren, taten, als wenn sie sie ärztlich untersuchten und bezeichnsten diejenigen, die biologisch wertlos und darum zu töten seien, in der Hauptsache Alte, Schwindsüchtige und Kranke. -- Ja, sagte mir ein SS-Sturmbannführer, ohne diese Massnahmen wäre das übervölkerte Polen für uns völlig wertlos. Wir holen nur nach, was die Natur überall im Tier- und Pflanzenreich von selbst besorgt und beim Menschen leider versäumt. - Der Hauptmann Wirth bat mich, in Berlin keine Änderungen seiner Anlagen

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17.) vorzuschlagen und alles so zu lassen, wie es wäre und sich bestens eingespült und bewährt habe. - Die Blausäure habe ich unter meiner Aufsicht vergreben lassen, da sie angeblich in Zersetzung geraten sei. - Am anderen Tage - den 19. August 1942. - fuhrer wir mit dem Auto des Hauptmann Wirth nach Treblinka 120 km NNO von Warschau. Die Einrichtung war etwa dieselbe, nur viel grösser als in Belzec. 8 Gaskammern und wahre Gebirge von Koffern, Textilien und Wäsche. Zu unseren Ehren wurde im Gemeinschafts-Saal in typisch himmler-schen Altdeutschen Stiel ein Bankett ~~zu unseren Ehren~~ gegeben. Das Essen war einfach, aber es stand alles in jeder Menge zur Verfügung. Himmler hatte selbst angeordnet, dass die Männer dieser Kommandos soviel Fleisch, Butter und sonstiges erhielten, insbesondere Alkohol, wie sie wollten. Professor Fannestiel hielt eine Rede, in der er den Männern die Nützlichkeit ihrer Aufgabe und die Wichtigkeit ihrer grossen Mission klar machte. Zu mir selbst sprach er von "sehr humanen Methoden und von Schönheit der Arbeit!" Ich verbürge mich dafür, dass er dies unglaubliche wirklich gesagt hat! - Den Mannschaften sagte er insbesondere: Wenn man diese Judenkörper sieht, dann wird einem erst recht klar, wie dankenswert eure Aufgabe ist.

18.) Beim Abschied wurden uns noch mehrere Kilogramm Butter und ^{1/2} Likör zum Mitnehmen angeboten. Ich hatte Mühe, glaubhaft zu machen, dass ich von meinem - angeblichen - Gut genug von alledem hätte, rauf Pfannstiel beglückt auch noch meine Portionen einstrich. Wir fuhren dann mit dem Auto nach Warschau. Dort traf ich, als ich vergeblich ein Schlafwagenbett zu erhalten versuchte, im Zuge der Sekretär der Schwedischen Gesandtschaft in Berlin, Baron von Otter. Ich habe noch unter dem frischen Eindruck der entsetzlichen Ereignisse diesem alles erzählt mit der Bitte, dies seiner Regierung und den Alliierten sofort zu berichten, da jeder Tag Verzögerung weiteren Tausenden und 10 Tausenden das Leben kosten müsse. Er bot mir an eine Referenz, als welche ich ihm Herrn Generalsuperintendenten D. Otto Dibelius, Berlin, Brüderweg 2, Lichterfelde West, an einen vertrauten Freund des Pfarrers Martin Niemöller und Mitglied der kirchlichen Widerstandsbewegung gegen den Nazismus. Ich traf Herrn v. Otter noch 2 mal in der Schwedischen Gesandtschaft. Er hat inzwischen nach Stockholm berichtet und teilte mir mit, dass dies Bericht erheblichen Einfluss auf die Schwedisch-Deutschen Beziehungen gehabt habe. Ich versuchte in gleicher Sache dem Päpstlichen Nuntius in Berlin Bericht zu erstatten. Dort wurde ich gefragt, ob ich Sekretär sei. Daraufhin wurde jede weitere Unterhaltung mit mir abgelehnt.

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19.) und ich zum Verlassen der Botschaft Seiner Heiligkeit aufgefordert. Beim Verlassen der Päpstlichen Botschaft wurde ich von einem Polizisten mit dem Rade verfolgt, der kurz an mir vorbeifuhr, anrief, mich dann aber völlig unbegreiflicher Weise laufen liess. Ich habe dann alles dies hunderten von Persönlichkeiten berichtet, unter anderem dem Syndikus des katholischen Bischofs von Berlin, Herrn Dr. Winter, mit der ausdrücklichen Bitte um Weitergabe an den päpstlichen Stuhl. - Ich muss noch hinzufügen, dass der SS-Sturmchef Günther vom Reichssicherheitshauptamt - ich glaube er ist der Sohn des Rasen-Günthers - Anfang 1944 nochmals sehr grosse Mengen Blausäure von mir verlangte für einen sehr dunklen Zweck. Er zeigte mir in der Kurfürstenstrasse in Berlin einen Schuppen, in dem er die Blausäure zu lagern gedachte. Ich erklärte ihm darauf, dass ich dafür ausgeschlossenweise die Verantwortung übernehmen könne. Es handelte sich um mehrere Waggons, genug, um viele Millionen Menschen damit umzubringen. Er sagte mir, dass er selbst noch nicht wisse, ob das Gift gebraucht würde, wann, für wen, auf welche Weise usw. Aber es müsse ständig verfügbar gehalten werden. Ich habe später oft an die Worte von Goebbels denken müssen.

Volkes töten wollten, sicher einschliesslich der Pfarrerschaft oder der misliebigen Offiziere. Das sollte in einer Art Lagersälen oder Klubräumen geschehen, soviel entnahm ich den Fragen der technischen Durchführung, die Günther an mich richtete. Es kann auch sein, dass er die Fremdarbeiter umbringen sollte, oder Kriegsgefangene - ich weiss es nicht. Auf jeden Fall richtete ich es so ein, dass die Blausäure sofort nach ihrer Ankunft in den beiden Konzentrationslagern Oranienburg und Auschwitz für irgendwelche Zwecke der Desinfektion verschwand. Das war etwas gefährlich für mich, aber ich hätte einfach sagen können, dass das Gift sich bereits in einer gefährlichen Zersetzung befunden habe. Ich bin sicher, dass Günther das Gift beschaffen wollte, um Millionen Menschen eventuell umzubringen. Es reichte für ca. 8 Millionen Menschen, 8500 kg. Über 2.175 kg habe ich die Rechnungen eingereicht. Die Rechnungen liess ich stets auf meinen Namen ausstellen, angeblich wegen der Diskretion, in Wahrheit um in meiner Verfügung freier zu sein und um das Gift verschwinden lassen zu können. Vor allem vermied ich es, durch Vorlage von Rechnungen die Sache immer wieder in Erinnerung zu bringen, sondern liess die Rechnungen lieber völlig unbezahlt, unter Vertröstung der Firma.

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21.) Der Direktor Dr. Peters der Degesch, Frankfurt a.M. und Friedberg, der diese Lieferung ausgeführt hat, hat mir erzählt, dass er Blausäure in Ampullen zum Töten von Menschen geliefert hat. -- Ein anderes Mal fragte mich Günther, ob es möglich sei, in den Festungsgräben vor Maria-Theresienstadt Juden, die dort spazieren gehen durften, im Freien mit Blausäure zu töten. Um diesen schrecklichen Plan zu vereiteln, erklärte ich dies für unmöglich. Ich habe dann später erfahren, dass das SD-Kommando Maria-Theresienstadt sich auf andere Weise doch Blausäure verschafft und die Juden umgebracht hat. -- Die schrecklichsten Konzentrationslager waren übrigens nicht Oranienburg oder Belzen oder Dachau, sondern Auschwitz, wo Millionen Menschen umgebracht worden sind, teils in Gaskammern, teils in sogenannten Toieautos, und Mauthausen-Gusen bei Linz. In Auschwitz war es üblich, Kinder dadurch umzubringen, dass man ihnen Tupfer mit Blausäure unter die Nase hielt. -- Ich habe im übrigen selbst im Lager Ravensbrück bei Fuerstenberg in Mecklenburg - dem Frauenkonzentrationslager - Versuche an Lebenden gesehen. Diese wurden auf Veranlassung von SS-Gruppenführer Dr.-Gebhardt-Hohenlychen durch SS-Hauptsturmführer Dr. Gundlach durchgeführt. Auch in Buchenwald wurden derartige Versuche an lebenden Menschen z.B. mit bis zu 100 Tabletten Pervitin

S.D.

22.) durchgeführt, bis unter Umständen zum tödlichen Ausgang. ¹⁴ diese Experimente hatte sich Himmler selbst die Zustimmung vorbehalten. Insbesondere wurde Fleckfieberimpfstoff und Lymphe sowie andere Sera dort ausprobiert. Die Versuche umfassten bis zu 100 oder 200 Menschen im Einzelfall, und zwar von der Lagerleitung zum Tode Verurteilte. -- Ich wunderte mich in Oranienburg, dass innerhalb Tagen alle Homosexuellen - viele hunderte - verschwand und zwar in den Öfen. -- Ich habe es im übrigen vermieden, allzu oft in Konzentrationslagern zu erscheinen, denn es war manchmal d. h. lich, zu Ehren der Besucher Leute aufzuhängen oder Exekutionen vorzunehmen. Der SS-Hauptsturmführer Dr. Fritz Krantz, der solche Dinge in grosser Zahl erlebt hat, erzählte mir oft hiervon mit tiefer Entrüstung. Z.B. wurden in Gusen-Mauthausen fast täglich zahlreiche Juden, die in einem grossen Steinbruch arbeiten sollten, die steile Wand heruntergestossen und unten als tödliche Unglücksfälle registriert. In Auschwitz sind derartige Gemeinheiten ebenfalls in viel grösserer Zahl begangen worden, als in Bolesn. -- Ich hatte das Glück, in meiner Dienststelle einige radikale Antinazies zu treffen, so den SS-Hauptsturmführer und Stabschef Heinrich Holländer, einen guten Katholiken, und den

23.) eben genannten Dr. Fritz Krantz. Holländer gab mir alle interessanten Sachen zur Kenntnis. Seine Frau hat einmal bei einem Essen dem Reichsarzt SS und Polizei, SS-Obergruppenführer Dr. Graewitz, Berlin, gleichzeitig Präsident des Deutschen Roten Kreuzes, heftige Vorwürfe wegen der Judentötung gemacht. Sie erhielt daraufhin einen erheblichen Rüffel und es wurde ihr verboten, diese Sache je wieder anzurühren.

Alle meine Angaben sind wörtlich wahr. Ich bin mir der ausserordentlichen Tragweite dieser meiner Aufzeichnungen vor Gott und der gesamten Menschheit voll bewusst und nehme es auf meinen Eid, dass nichts von allem, was ich registriert habe, erdichtet oder erfunden ist, sondern alles sich genau so verhält.

24.) Als Referenzen über meine Person gebe ich an :

Frau Pfarrer Martin Niemöller, z.Zt. Leoni am Starnberger See
Generalsuperintendent D.Dibelius (Otto), Berlin-Lichterfelde.

Pfarrer Dr.Martin Niemöller, Dachau ?????

Pfarrer Rehling, Hagen, Westfalen, Lutherkirche

Dorothea Schulz, Sekretärin von Pfarrer Niemöller in Leoni bei München

Dr.Felix Buss, Justiziar von Telefungen, Berlin SW 11.

Direktor Alexander Menne, Direktor der Glasurit-Werke, bis 1939 in England in der Farbindustrie tätig, von Juli 44- Februar 45 in SD-Gefängnis.

Praeger Dr.Koch, Westf.BekanntnisKirche, Bad Oeynhausen

Pfarrer Buchholz, Anstaltspfarrer von Berlin-Gefängnis Plötzensee. Er begleitete die Offiziere des 20.Juli 44 zum Schaffot.

Ergänzungen : In Belzec hatte ich den Eindruck, dass alle wirklich tot waren, obwohl mir Hauptmann Birth erzählte, dass sie die absonderlichsten Dinge erlebt hätten, z.B. ein munter lebendes Kind morgens in einer über Nacht umgeblasen stehen gebliebenen Luchter vorgefunden hätten. Merkwürdigerweise sagten sie bei den Gintestkranken die merkwürdigsten Dinge und die unterschiedlichsten Empfindlichkeiten festgestellt. Die Erprobung der verschiedenen Tötungsarten wird sich nicht auf große Zahlen erstreckt haben. Aber versucht wurde manches. z.B. - wohl auch in größerer Zahl - Tötung mit Pressluft in alten Dampfkesseln, in die diese mit Kompressoren eingepresset wurde, wie diese zum Asphaltaufräumen üblich sind. - In Treblitz hatte ich den Eindruck, dass manche noch lebten. Fast alle hatten die Augen offen und blickten daher entsetzt aus. Bewegungen habe ich jedoch nicht mehr gesehen, obwohl ich darauf genau aufgepasst habe. - Von einem geradezu heroischen Sterben erzählt mir mit tiefer Ergriffenheit der SS-Hauptsturmführer Dr. med. Villing aus Dortmund. Es betraf tausende polnischer Geistlicher, die sich selbst Gruben anheben mussten und dann ausgezogen vor den Gassen erschossen wurden.

Ergänzungen Blatt 2.

Auf die höhnischen Fragen, ob sie nun noch immer an Christus und Maria glaubten, antworteten sie mit einem festen Bekenntnis zu Christus unter Anrufung der Heiligen Mutter Gottes von Tschostochau. Dies Sterben sei ergreifend und überzeugend gewesen, sagte mir der Dr. Villing. - Auch andere Intellektuelle in Polen - namentlich Lehrerinnen und Lehrer - sind auf eine ähnlich vorbildliche & anständige Art zu hunderttausenden gestorben.

Eine mir verbürgt erzählte Todesart war, die Leute die Treppe zu einem Hochofen hinaufsteigen zu lassen, sie dort immerhin mit einem Panzschuss zu töten und dann im Ofen verschwinden zu lassen. Auch in Ziegeldirndöfen sollen viele Menschen getötet und verbrannt worden sein. Diese meine Quelle ist jedoch nicht genügend zuverlässig. -

Ein hoher Polizeichef von Bromberg, SS-Obersturmbannführer Haller, erzählte mir und den Ärzten des SS-Kurses, dass vor seinem Eintreffen in Bromberg es dort üblich war, Juden Kinder in den Wohnungen gleich mit dem Kopf an die Wand zu klopfen. Er habe diesen Unfug abgestellt und für Erschießung gesorgt. Es-

L e s e a b s c h r i f t

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5. Ergänzungen.

Besonders tragisch sei ihm in Erinnerung, wie zwei kleine Mädchen vor ihnen niederkniet seien und gebetet hätten— 5 und 8 Jahre alte—und wie sie dann doch erschossen werden "mussten"!!— Hall sagte ferner: Bei den Massenhinrichtungen der Polen mussten diese sich lange Gräben ausheben und sich dann auf dem Bauch in diese hineinlegen. Sie wurden alsdann von oben mit Maschinenpistolen erschossen. Die Nächsten mussten sich dann auf die noch warmen Leichen drauflegen und wurden gleichfalls erschossen. Viele seien noch gar nicht tot gewesen und mussten dann beim Versuch, aus den 5-6 Lagen herauszukriechen, am Grabenrand erschossen werden.—

Ein hohes Mitglied der deutschen Regierung in Krakau erzählte mir, während er die Pute trennierte, von einem besonders glücklichen Fang, den sie gemacht hätten. Sie hätten ein führendes Mitglied der polnischen Widerstandsbewegung gefasst, einen Juden. Dieser hätte sich beim Verhör in Schweigen gehüllt. Darauf habe man ihm die Handgelenke gebrochen. Auch da noch habe er geschwiegen. Darauf hätte man ihn mit dem Hintern auf eine glühende Herdplatte gesetzt: Sie hätten mal sehen sollen, wie der "erl" gesprächig wurde !!!—

Ergänzungen Blatt 4.

Bei einem Besuch bei der örtlichen Bearbeitung der Waffen-SS in Lublin am 18. August 1942 erzählten uns die beiden Bauaufseher von einer am Vormittag stattgehabten Besichtigung der Leichenhalle eines SS-Kriegsgefangenenlagers bei Lublin. Dort seien die Leichen zu tausenden aufgetürmt gewesen. Während sie wegen des Umbaus Messungen durchgeführt hätten, hätten sich plötzlich 2 Menschen bewegt. Der begleitende SS-Rottenführer habe darauf nur gefragt: Wo denn??— Dann habe er ein bereitliegendes Stück Rundeisen genommen und den beiden den Schädel eingeschlagen.— Nicht die Tatsache, meinten die Bauaufseher— habe sie überrascht sondern die Selbstverständlichkeit, mit der das geschah!—

—Am Tage meiner Besichtigung in Belzec passierte es, dass eine Jüdin mit einem verborgen gehaltenen Rasiermesser einigen Juden des Arbeitskommandos einige Schnitte in den Hals beibrachte. Wirth bedauerte lebhaft, dass die Frau schon tot sei, sie hätte exemplarisch bestraft werden müssen.— Die verletzten Arbeitsjuden liess er sorgfältig pflegen und ärztlich betreuen.

Ergänzungen Blatt 5., wo

wie er sagte, um den Glauben wach zu halten, dass sie angesiedelt, belohnt und am Leben erhalten werden sollten. Er-Wirth-konnte sich selbst nicht genug darüber wundern und amüsieren, dass die das glaubten.....Und das glauben die Kerle, das glauben die Kerle!!!- rief er vor sich hin !!

-- In Belceo wurden nach dem Öffnen der Waggon und dem Entkleiden die Männer und Jungen durch den Lautsprecher aufgefordert, die überall herumliegenden Kleidungsstücke sofort zu den Waggon zu bringen, mit denen sie in einem grossen Lager verschwanden. "Wer am besten schafft, kann beim Arbeitskommando bleiben !!- Nun begann ein Wettlauf auf Leben und Tod dieser nackten Menschen beim Aufräumen, unter dem Hohn Gelächter der Mannschaften. Natürlich verschwanden sie alle nachher in den Gaskammern.- Lediglich einige ganz alte und schwache Personen wurden seitwärts getragen und dann erschossen.-Ich denke an einige für mich tief ergreifende Bilder : An das 3-4-jährige Judenbübchen, dem man ein Bündel Bindfäden in die Hand drückte zum Zusammenbinden der Schuhe, wie es versonnen die Bindfäden an die Leute austeilte. Oder an ein kleines Korallenkettchen, das ein kleines Mädchen einen Meter

Ergänzungen, Blatt 6.

kleines Mädchen einen Meter vor der Gaskammer verlor: Wie sich ein Bübchen von vielleicht 3 Jahren danach bückte, um es aufzuheben, wie es seine Freude daran hat - und dann in die Kammer gestossen, nein, in diesem Fall sachte hineingedrückt wird!-- SS-Hauptsturmführer Obermeyer erzählte mir : Ich habe in einem Dorf hier in der Gegend einen Juden nebst Frau aus meiner Heimatstadt Pirmasens angetroffen. Der Mann war im Weltkrieg Wachtmeister und ist ein sehr ordentlicher Kerl. Als Kind hat er mich vor dem Tode des Überflahrenderdons gerettet. Ich werde jetzt die Leute mitnehmen und in das Arbeitskommando eingliedern.-Auf meine Frage, was weiter aus den beiden würde, sagte Obermeyer: Nachher genau wie die andern, da darf man sich nichts von annehmen, es gibt's nur eins ! Ich werde sie immerhin erschossen lassen !-- Ich habe auch innerhalb der SS eine grössere Anzahl von Leuten angetroffen, die diese Methoden schärfstens verurteilten und die darüber zur Ablehnung oder gar zu einem glühenden Hass gegen den Nationalsozialismus gelangten. Ich nenne- auch wieder in letzter Verantwortung- hier einige Namen :

SS-Sturmabführer Dr. med. Bocht aus Hagen i. Westf. Chef der

Ergänzungen Blatt 7.

Innere Abteilung des SS-Lazaretts Berlin-.

SS-Hauptsturmführer Dr.med.Nissen, Itzehoe.

SS-Obersturmführer Dr.med. Sorge aus Jena,

SS-Hauptscharführer, Stabschef bei Reichsarzt SS. Heinrich Holländer, Antinazi-Aktivist und glühender Mörder des Nazismus

Hauptsturmführer Dr.Fritz Krantz, beim Reichsarzt SS Abteilung

SS-Gruppenführer Dr.pharm.Blumenreuther, Oberster Schutzzeugen-
meister beim Reichsarzt SS und Polizei,

Dr.Rudolphi, SS-Sturmabführer, ebendort

Dr.Behnenburg, ebendort. Rudolphi trat Oktober 44 das Hitlerbild
den Füßen.

Überhaupt ist es weit gefehlt, die SS auch nur einigermaßen als
einen einheitlichen Haufen anzusehen. Ich weiß, wie schwer es ist,
die Unterschiede zu machen in der Beurteilung und Behandlung. Ich
verstehe, dass man sich in irgend eine Formation besonders halten
möchte und kenne die von der SS begangenen Greuel wohl am besten.
Aber dabei ist nicht zu übersehen, dass z.B. mindestens 2/3 der
holländischen SS gezwungen zur SS durch Lug und Betrug durch
genannte Sportkurse gepresst wurde. Ebenso ging es vielen Deutschen

Ergänzungen Blatt 8.

Deutschen, namentlich aus der Hitlerjugend, die ahnungslos über-
rumpelt und überlistet wurden. Ferner den vielen, die von der
Luftwaffe oder Marine auf Hitlers Veranlassung einfach in die
SS gepresst wurden. Das muss in der Wahrheit und Gerechtig-
keit willen berücksichtigt werden!

Tuebingen Westphalie Garkent. 24
maintenant: Rottwil, Hôtel Mohr 33
6 Mai 1945.

Indications personnelles: Gerstein Kurt August, ex-
des services de l'état pour Antitrust 27 septembre 1936,
ingénieur diplômé.

Né le 11 août 1905 à Münster/Westphalie. Associé
de l'usine De Limon Flühme & Co, grossier
automatique pour fers Westinghouses, Kuors et loco-
motives.

Père Ludwig E. Gerstein Landgericht - Président hors de ser-
vice, Hagen/Westphalie.

Mère: Clara Gerstein née Schumann + 1937.
Marié depuis 1937 à Elfriede née Bensel à Tuebin-
gen Garkentstrasse 24. Trois enfants Arnold 5 ans,
Adelheid 3 1/2 ans, Ulf 2 ans.

Vie: 1905-1910 à Münster/Westphalie. 1910-1919 à Sarre-
bruck. 1919-21 Halberstadt. 1921-1925 Neuwied

2) près de Berlin. Là 1925 maternelle à lycée humaniste.

Études: Université Marbourg/Jahre 1925-1927 Berlin
1927-1931 Berlin - Charlottenburg Haute école de technique.

1931 ingénieur diplômé. - Depuis 1925 membre actif
de la jeunesse protestante organisée (Union chrétienne
des jeunes hommes, EVJM, YMCA et Cercle autour de
la Bible). Politique: Adhérent de Heesemann et Bone-
ring, actif pour eux. - Persuadé depuis juin 1933
de part de la Gestapo pour activité contre l'état pour
l'église du curé Niemöller. (tu même temps exé-
cutionnaire)

si on comme employé du service de l'état
30 janvier 1935 pour avoir ^{trouvé} ~~trouvé~~ un spectacle
sion ^{sonné et blâmé en public} de la NSDAP au Théâtre de ville à Hagen

- Westphalie (le donne antichrétien Wille Kind).

27 novembre 1935 Ex examen des Bergassur. Hors employé
de l'état à Sarrebruck. Jusqu'à 27 septembre 1936

3) employé de l'État (Haute administration des mines de la Sarre à Sarrebourg.) Cet premier emprisonnement se fit pour ~~avoir~~ avoir envoyé 8.500 brochures antinazies à tous les conseils de ministères et hauts employés de la justice en Allemagne. - Selon un désir de prédilection, alors, je faisais des études médicales à l'institut protestant pour mission tropicale médicale à Tübingen. Associé de la maison De Simon Plücker et Cie, indépendant j'étais libre et indépendant dans mes résolutions, recevant ca 18.000.- Reichsmark par an. Dont je pouvais, depuis 1931, ca un tiers pour mes ^{travaux} idées religieuses. En préférence j'ai fait imprimer ca 230.000 brochures antinazies religieuses et antinazies à mes frais, pour les ~~faire~~ ^{à mes frais} envoies par ^{la} poste.

14 juillet 1938 deuxième emprisonnement au camp de concentration de Wetzlar pour agitation antinazie.

4) Souvent, j'étais fus interrogé et averti par la Gestapo. Pendant toutes les années depuis 1936 - 1944 il m'était interdit de parler publiquement en Allemagne. —

Écoutant des massacres des imbéciles et des aliénés à Grafenrheinfeld, Hadamar etc, choqué et blessé dans mon être intérieur, je n'avais qu'un seul désir : Voir, voir dans toute cette machine et alors crier dans tout le peuple ! Je n'avais à cette entreprise des grands scrupules étant ayant été moi-même deux fois la victime des agents du SD (Substitut d'inculpation qui s'étaient glissés au plus secret conseil des Frères de l'église résistante confessionnelle (Kommunion) et même dans l'association joyeuse des prêtres. En outre, une belle - ~~sœur~~ sœur - melle Berta Ebeling - était assassinée à Hadamar. Muni de deux références des employés

de Gerloof, ayant traité mon cas, il n'était pas difficile
d'entrer dans la SS armée. ~~Le~~ Les employés étaient de
l'officier que mon idéalisme, qu'il admirait,
devait servir au profit du nazisme. - Le 10 mars
1941 j'entrai dans la SS d'instruction élémentaire ^{avec 40 médecins} et à
Hambourg - Jurgeloum, à Brême / Hollande et à
Lübeck. A l'Hollande, aussitôt je pris contact
avec la résistance nationale Hollandaise (Ingénieur
diplômé Ubbeek de Doesbourg). - ~~Pour~~ Pour mes
études doubles, bientôt je réussis au service médico-tek-
nique de SS Fuehrerhauptamt - Groupe D - service
sanitaire de la SS armée, secteur d'hygiène. A ce
service, il était à moi de me choisir moi-même
mes devoirs avec toute largeur. Je construisais des camions
et installations de désinfection et des filtres d'eau potable
pour troupes, camps de prisonniers et camps de concentration.

6) Pour connaissance exacte de cette industrie j'y réussis
bientôt, mes précédentes n'étant pas réussies. En Aïssi, il fut
possible de baisser le nombre des prisonniers morts conside-
rablement. Injustement bientôt j'eus grands succès
et on me ^{permettait} ~~voyait~~ ^{pour} comme grand génie technique. Ainsi,
souvent je fus consulté de part de ministre intérieur et ministre
est. ~~Ainsi~~ Au moins, je réussis à baisser, quelque peu
la fièvre la grande vague de fièvre purpurée de 1941 aux
camps de prisonniers etc. Pour mes succès, bientôt je fus
lieutenant. Décembre 1941, le tribunal qui avait ordonné ma
conclusion des NSDAP eut connaissance de ma entrée
dans la SS armée. On faisait grands efforts pour me char-
ger et à me poursuivre. Mais pour mes grands succès et pour ma
conscience honorable je fus tenu et protégé par mon chef.
Janvier 1942 je fus nommé chef du service ^{du rayon} technique - sa-
nitaire ~~Ainsi~~, contenant aussi le service des gas-
tronomie techniques pour désinfection.

7.) Le 8 juin¹⁹⁴², il entra dans une chambre...
à 55 Gruppenführer Guenter de Kretschmer
d'arriver en civil, inconnu à moi. Il me donna
l'ordre de procurer aussitôt 200 kg d'acide pour...
pour un dessin extrêmement discrète et d'être
avec le poison au moyen d'un...
à un lieu, qui n'était pas, semblait comme
qu'un claustrum. - Quelques semaines plus tard nous
partions à Allen près de Pologne. Je ne pourrais
judiquement la manière de l'ordre. Mais je ne
chacuns, pourquoi, par hasard, je réussis à voir la
toute cette machinerie. En outre, comme expert pour
cette machine, j'étais avec autorité et compétent,
à tout cas faire disparaître le poison comme dissolvant et
à empêcher une utilisation par des personnes. - Vous l'avez
accompagné - par hasard - par 43 Obersturmbannführer...

8.) Dr. med. Johannstien, ordonnateur de l'Église de l'université
Mabowz / Jahn. - Vous portez... par l'autorité
Joublin. Je vous ai Collins j'avais fait entendre que
l'acide était destiné pour les personnes. Pour cela, l'après-
midi la voiture fut observée avec attention. -

A Joublin nous fûmes reçus par SS Gruppenführer
Boeck, qui nous dit: Toute cette affaire est une des
plus secrètes choses, qu'il y a, et même la plus secrète.
Elucidum, qui en parle, sera fusillé aussitôt. Hier, deux
personnes sont morts. Alors il nous expliqua: A la
Saint - 17 août 1942 - il y a 3 installations:

1) Orlée, à la Naumie Joublin - Jambeg au secteur de
la Cygne de démarcation Russe. Maximum par jour 15
personnes.

c) Sobibor. (en Pologne; je ne suis pas exécuté, ou) 20.000 par
jour vu!

3) Treblinka, 120 km NNE de Varsovie. 25.000 par jour vu

4) Maidanek (près Joublin) vu en préparation.

93. J'ai visité Belac, Tréblina, Maidonek avec le
chef de ces installations, le capitaine de police Wisk.
— Globocnik dit: "Il vous faudra faire la distinction
entre de très grandes quantités des textiles, linge, vête-
ments, dix ou vingt fois le résultat de la "Sprawozdanie
samolubny". Toute autre collection n'est faite que pour
~~devenir~~ obscurcir la provenance des vêtements juifs, Polonais,
Roumains etc. En vérité, le résultat de nos installations
est 10-20 fois celui de toutes autres collections:

③

Une manière de tuer des hommes était de les
 faire descendre l'escalier d'un haut fourneau,
 de les tuer là d'un coup de fusil et de les faire
 disparaître au fourneau. ~~Aussi~~ On dit que beau-
 coup d'hommes sont morts aux fourneaux
 remplis des briquetiers. Mais je ne peux pas garan-
 tir pour la vérité de ce rapport. —

Un des chefs de la police de Bromberg,
 le Oberkommissar Walter, a raconté
 aux^{es} médecins de mon cours et à moi, que
 avant son arrivée à Bromberg, il était usé
 de claquer des enfants juifs par tête au
 mur. J'ai même assisté à cet abus et
 j'ai fusillé ces enfants. Je se rappelle très bien.

④ de deux petites filles de 5 et 8 ans, qui étaient tombées
 à ses genoux pour faire leurs prières — et qui ensuite
 devaient être fusillées. — Walter nous raconta.

Aux massacres des Polonais ils furent forcés de
 creuser les grandes fosses et de se poser dessus
 au ventre. Ensuite ils furent mitraillés par moyen
 des pistolets mécaniques. Les prochains furent chargés
 de se poser aux cadavres encore chauds pour être fusillés
 ensuite. Beaucoup n'étaient pas ^{morts} et furent fusillés, joints
 tentative de glisser ^{indépendamment} les 5-6 touches d'hommes.

Un des chefs du gouvernement allemand
 à Varsovie m'a raconté, racontant la
 tuerie d'un coup extrêmement
~~l'homme~~ ^{l'homme} ~~fortune~~ ^{fortune} A'ils avaient saisi un des
 chefs de la résistance polonaise un juif. Alor-
 s'il y avait ^{grande} silence. Alors on l'a

(5) cassé les poignets.
Mais encore il garda silence. Alors on l'a
mis avec le derviche au plaque du foyer ardent
Et lors, il était prêt de parler ! —

Par l'occasion d'une visite à l'administration des travaux de construction - le 30 juin, le 18 août 1942, ces deux officiers architectes nous racontaient une visite au dépôt mortuaire d'un champ de prisonniers près du public. Les cadavres étaient massés par quelques milliers. Etaient occupés de leurs travaux, et ~~étaient~~ ~~étaient~~ tout voyageant tout à coup ils voyaient quelques uns qui s'enfuyaient. Le SS Volksgenosse du service

⑤ ne demanda que : Où ? ... Alors il a
pris une pièce de fer rond et l'a déjà à disposition
et pour leur briser les crânes. - Ce n'était pas
le fait - me dirent les archéologues - qui les
survivaient, mais que ^{tout ceux} s'entendaient... le bon moi

Par occasion de une visite à Belzec, une
juive à ^{blessée} ~~camp~~ avec un rasoir quelques hommes
du commando de travail. Witt regretta qu'elle
c'était déjà morte, pour ne pouvoir pas en
faire ^{un exemple} ~~un exemple~~. Les juifs blessés il les
soignait ^{et par milliers} ~~soignait~~ avec exactitude, pour leur
faire croire qu'ils seraient épargnés et récompensés.
Au A Dente on se demandait qu'ils croyaient
qu'il y avait, qu'ils recevraient leurs sacs, leurs poches
et tout, les sacs, même il écrit : —

1) AOKI et à l'intérieur, après se débarrasser les hommes et les jeunes
hommes invités au point à grande vitesse les vêtements et surtout
il y avait un wagon : les meilleurs travailleurs sont membres du
service de travail - Il y eut une concurrence de vie et de mort
de ces hommes pour obtenir les vêtements, les SS se moquant d'eux
naturellement, l'après, tous^{sont} d'ignors avec chambres de gaz.
seulement quelques personnes très vieilles et très faibles
furent fusilées. - Je me ~~souviens~~ ^{souviens} de quelques
images saisissantes : un petit garçon juif, auquel on
avait ordonné de donner une petite ficelle à toute per-
sonne pour ^{joindre} ensemble les chaussures, et qui, rêveur,
distribuait les ficelles. Une tous - involontaire - vient
engagé pour la machinerie de leur propre usage. Un
je me souviens à une petite fille née le 5 ans
qui perd petit cordon de corsets ! un petit garçon de
un mètre devant chambre de la mort
trois ans, qui se soulevait, qui s'en réjouit - et d'ailleurs, il
lance dans la chambre. - Le SS Obst / Hauptsturmführer, etc.

2) Berninger m'a raconté : j'ai rencontré à un village de cette
région un juif et sa mariée de mon lieu natal Pirmasens.
1914 - 1918, il était sergent, homme honorable. ~~Comme~~ ^{En} enfance,
il m'a sauvé de la mort d'être passé sur le corps. Je pren-
drai ces hommes et les ferai membres du mouvement de travail
- demandé, que soit leur sort futur, il me dit :
l'après ? Je même comme les autres, dans telles choses
il n'y a pas de différences. Je les ferai
fusiller ! - Même à l'intérieur de la SS j'ai ren-
contré quelque nombre d'hommes condamnant ces
méthodes vivement, pleins d'une haine ardente
contre le nazisme. Voilà quelques noms de
tels hommes :

2/3 de la SS hollandaise n'était dans cette
position - que forcés par des méthodes si, plus
fouilles et violentes. Le même, beaucoup

Et allemands, en présence de la jeune fille, sont
forcés dans la SS par mensonge et ~~jeu de~~ tromperie.
C'est le même sort comme celui des membres de
l'orphelinat et marine, forcés à SS par Hitler.
Pour la justice, il est nécessaire de pas oublier
tout cela !

RAPPORT du Dr GERSTEIN de TUBINGEN
du 6 Mai 1945

RENSEIGNEMENTS SUR L'AUTEUR DU RAPPORT

Kurt GERSTEIN, ingénieur diplômé, adjoint du service des mines, hors service, éloigné du service de l'Etat pour activité anti-nationale-socialiste au profit de l'Eglise Reformée (pasteur NIEMOELLER, le 27.9.36). Je suis co-proprétaire de la firme de LINDE FLUENE et Cie., fabrique de machines pour graissage automatique des locomotives.

Mon père: Ludwig E. GERSTEIN, président de la Cour de Justice en retraite de Hagen (Westphalie)
Ma mère: Clara GERSTEIN, née SCHMIDTKE, décédée en 1931.

Je suis marié depuis le 31 Aout 1937 avec Elfriede née BENSCH, domiciliée à Tubingen, Gartenstrasse 84. Nous avons trois enfants, Arnulf âgé de 5 ans, Adelheid, 3 ans 1/2, Olaf 2 ans.

CURRICULUM VITAE

de 1905 à 1910 à Münster (Westphalie)
de 1910 à 1919 à Sarrebruck
en 1921 à Halberstadt
de 1922 à 1925 à Neuruppin, près de Berlin, où j'ai passé en 1925 mon bachelier au lycée.
de 1925 à 1930, travail pratique dans des mines alternativement avec des études à Harburg, Anklam et Berlin.
en 1931, examen d'ingénieur diplômé.

Depuis 1925, membre actif de la jeunesse protestante particulièrement dans les cercles bibliques des instituts pédagogiques supérieurs.

ACTIVITE POLITIQUE

partisan actif de BRUNING et de STRASELMANN.

Depuis 1933, constamment poursuivi par la Gestapo pour activité anti-nationale au profit de l'Eglise de la résistance chrétienne (pasteur Martin NIEMOELLER, Berlin-Dahle-Dachau) et pour continuation des réunions interdites des Jeunesses protestantes.

Le 30 Janvier 1935, j'ai été malmené et blessé pour avoir protesté contre la représentation de la pièce anti-chrétienne "Ettelinc", au théâtre d'Etat de Hagen (Westphalie)

Le 27 Novembre 1935, inspecteur-adjoint du service des Mines; ensuite, fonctionnaire de l'Administration des Mines de la Sarre à Sarrebruck.

Le 27 Septembre 1936, arrêté par la Gestapo, dans mon bureau, pour avoir envoyé 8.500 brochures anti-nazies à tous les hauts fonctionnaires de l'Etat; Notifi est mis en état d'arrestation de "protection" pour être livré à une activité néfaste pour l'Etat, malgré de nombreux avertissements, en organisant

L. L.

une attaque systématique, économique et organisée dans le domaine littéraire contre l'Etat national-socialiste.

Ayant quitté le service de l'Etat, je pus réaliser un de mes désirs préférés, étudier la médecine tropicale à Tubingen à l'Institut Protestant alle pour mission médicales. Les 12.000 marks annuels que me procurait la maison LINCK FLUMER & Cie, me rendaient indépendant et économiquement libre, 1/2 de mes revenus était dépensé par moi, depuis 1931, pour mes idéaux religieux. C'est à mes frais que j'ai fait imprimer 250.000 brochures religieuses et anti-nazies et ai assuré leur diffusion.

Le 12.7.38 eut lieu ma deuxième arrestation par la Gestapo et le S.D. Stuttgart. J'ai d'abord passé quelques semaines dans diverses prisons du S.D. et fus conduit ensuite au camp de concentration de Wulzheim. Suprême, j'ai été interrogé et averti, deux douzaines de fois, par des agents de la Gestapo du S.D. Défense me fut donnée de prendre la parole sur tout le territoire du Reich et ceci a été maintenu jusqu'à la fin du système nazi.

Lorsque j'appris l'assassinat nazi des aliénés à Hadamar, Grafenauk et ailleurs, je n'eus plus qu'un désir, voir jusqu'au fond de cette machine de sorcières et communiquer au peuple ce que j'y verrai, n'importe au risque de ma vie. Je n'avais pas à avoir de scrupules, ayant été moi-même, à deux fois la victime des agents du S.D., qui s'étaient eux-mêmes infiltrés dans les milieux les plus fermés de l'Eglise protestante et qui avaient pris cette note avec moi.

Je pensais "Ce que vous êtes capables de faire, je le peux mieux que vous", et je me constituais volontaire pour entrer dans les S.S. J'ai pris cette décision d'autant plus facilement que ma propre belle-sœur, Bertha KRELLING avait été assassinée à Hadamar.

A l'aide de deux recommandations d'agents de la Gestapo qui avaient été chargés de mon cas, il me fut facile d'être accepté dans les Waffen SS; un de ces Messieurs m'avait dit: "Avec votre dose d'idéalisme, vous devriez être enfoncé jusqu'au cou dans le parti". C'est ainsi qu'ils me montrèrent eux-mêmes le chemin à prendre. Ma formation de base me fut donnée à Hamburg, Langenhorn, dans un stage que je suivis avec 40 médecins. Ensuite à Arnhem en Hollande, et à Oranienburg. A Arnhem, je fus mis immédiatement en relations avec la résistance hollandaise par mon ami d'études, le fabricant Uobink DOESBURG.

Mes études doubles, en tant que médecin et technicien me conduisent bientôt à l'E.M. des S.S., section D. Hygiène. Il faut avouer que cette section était d'une largeur de conception remarquable parfaitement consciente. Le choix de mon occupation m'est laissé entièrement et librement. Je me mets à construire des installations de désinfection locales et mobiles pour camps de prisonniers, camps de concentration, troupes au combat en grande quantité pour subvenir à un besoin pressant. Sans avoir de mérite personnel à cela, j'obtiens de gros succès et à partir de ce moment, on me considère, à tort, comme un génie technique. Je dispose tout simplement d'un solide bon sens et d'une grande sûreté d'instinct. A partir de ce moment, je suis fortement utilisé pour des projets du Ministère du Travail et du Ministère de l'Armement. Je dois me charger de remettre dans le bon chemin le système de

EST et

3

désinfection très insuffisant du O.L.E. Ce système était déjà tellement saboté qu'il n'y a pas grand chose à améliorer. Toutefois je réussis à stopper la terrible vague de typhus de 1941 qui causa quotidiennement plusieurs dizaines de milliers de morts dans les camps de prisonniers et de concentration. Bientôt je deviens sous-lieutenant, puis lieutenant.

En décembre 1941, je suis à nouveau en grand danger. Le Tribunal du parti qui avait décidé mon exécution ayant appris que je m'étais infiltré dans un L.E. de B.E. Grâce à mes réussites et à l'estime générale dont je jouis, je suis protégé par mes chefs et maintenu.

En février 1942, je suis nommé chef de la section technique sanitaire qui comprend, en même temps, tout le système de l'eau potable et toute la désinfection technique, même à l'aide de gaz très toxiques.

Le 8 Juin 1942, le S.S. Sturmbannführer GULSTER du R.E.H.A. de la Kurfürstentrasse vient dans mon bureau. Il est en civil. Je ne l'ai jamais vu. Avec beaucoup d'allusions mystérieuses, il me donne l'ordre de lui procurer 260 kgs d'acide prussique et de me rendre avec ce poison, avec une voiture du R.E.H.A. dans un endroit connu seulement du conducteur.

Quelque temps après, je me rends, avec cette voiture, à Kallin, près de Prague. Je pouvais m'imaginer, approximativement le genre de mission dont il s'agissait. Je l'accepte toutefois, car aujourd'hui encore il ne semble qu'un hasard ressemblant étrangement au destin, me mit en situation de jeter un coup d'oeil exactement là où je voulais voir clair de toutes les fibres de mon cœur. Parmi des milliers de postes possibles, on m'avait confié, parmi les centaines d'autres, juste le poste qui m'approchait le plus de cette sorte de chose et qui me chargerait, moi parmi tant d'autres d'y travailler. Si j'y pense, cela me semble incroyable et cela d'autant plus si l'on tient compte de mon passé qui m'a conduit plusieurs fois dans les prisons de la Gestapo et du S.D. pour activités anti-nationales et, il n'y a pas si longtemps, dans un camp de concentration, ceci étant connu largement de mes chefs, par suite de la dénonciation du Parti. Vraiment le S.D. et mon patron le R.E.H.A. ont magnifiquement dormi dans ce cas et ont rendu d'une façon exemplaire le bon jardinier.

Toutefois en exécution d'un ordre reçu, je garde le secret absolu sur cette mission même dans le bureau et ne parle à personne de cette chose. Aucun doute n'est possible, si dans ma situation je me livre à une indiscretion, je suis tué après des tortures effroyables et ma famille sera exécutée en même temps que moi.

Je n'ai pas le moindre scrupule d'accepter cette mission, car tout autre l'aurait menée à bien dans l'esprit du S.D., tandis que moi, considéré comme autorité dans le domaine de l'acide prussique et des gaz très toxiques, je peux très facilement faire disparaître tout le chargement sous prétexte que la matière est abîmée ou décomposée. C'est ainsi seulement que l'emploi d'acide prussique pour l'exécution d'êtres humains peut être empêché. En tout cas je fais le nécessaire, à partir de ce moment, pour avoir au besoin sur moi, pour mon usage personnel, toujours du poison sur moi, ainsi qu'un pistolet bien chargé qui ne me quitte ni de jour ni de nuit.

Une place restant libre dans la voiture en question je suis accompagné par le S.S. Obersturmbannführer Professor Docteur FRANKENSTEIN, tenant la chaire d'hygiène à l'Université de Marburg (Lahn)

b; L.

A Lublin dans la fabrique d'acide prussique, j'avais fait comprendre volontairement au personnel, par de maladroites questions techniques, que l'acide prussique était destiné à tuer des êtres humains. J'ai pratiqué ainsi à chaque fois, ceci étant la meilleure façon de lancer des rumeurs dans le peuple. Le véhicule fut surveillé très étroitement à Lublin.

1. Lublin nous sommes vus par le SS Gruppenführer GLOBOCNIK Général de la Waffen SS. Celui-ci dit: "Ce secret d'Etat est actuellement un des plus importants, on peut dire tranquillement le plus important, chaque homme qui en parle sera immédiatement fusillé; hier ~~je~~ justement, nous avons fait faire deux brèves. Actuellement (nous sommes le 17 Août 1942) nous avons 3 installations

1. Belzec, situé sur la route Lublin-Lemberg, dans l'angle nord juste à l'endroit où la ligne de démarcation russe coupe la route.
Rendement quotidien environ 15.000 exécutions
Utilisation moyenne jusqu'à par depuis Avril 42: 11.000 par jour,
2. Sobibor, près de Lublin en Pologne, je ne sais pas exactement où, 20.000 exécutions par jour depuis environ Juin 42
3. Treblinka, en Pologne, 120 kms nord-nord-est de Varsovie.
25.000 exécutions par jour, depuis ~~environ~~ Mai 42
4. Maidanek, près de Lublin, encore en préparation,

Accompagné du chef de toutes ces fabriques de morts, le Capitaine de Police WIRTH, j'ai visité à fond tous ces endroits à l'exception de Maidanek. WIRTH est lui-même chargé par HITLER et ~~HEIMLER~~ de mission, qui a supprimé les aliénés à Hadamar, Grafeneck et ailleurs.

Se tournant vers moi, ~~FRANK~~ GLOBOCNIK dit: "Votre devoir est celui de désinfecter les immenses quantités de linge, linges, vêtements et souliers que produisent nos usines. Si tous les ans nous collectons des vêtements parmi le peuple danois, cela n'est fait que pour camoufler, vis-à-vis du peuple, et des ouvriers étrangers, la provenance de ces immenses quantités de friperies. Un autre aspect beaucoup plus important de votre mission est de modifier le fonctionnement même de nos instituts de mort. Actuellement cela se fait, grâce aux échappements de gaz d'un vieux moteur Diesel russe. Ceci doit se modifier et aller beaucoup plus vite. Je pense surtout à l'acide prussique. Avant-hier (le 15 Août 42), le Fuehrer et ~~HEIMLER~~ étaient ici. J'ai reçu l'ordre de ne pas donner de permis aux gens qui sont obligés de visiter ces installations pour des raisons de service indispensables, mais de les accompagner personnellement en vue de la conservation du secret.

FRANKENSTEIN demande alors: "Qu'est ce que le Fuehrer a dit de tout ceci?" Réponse de GLOBOCNIK: "Toute l'action doit être menée en plus vite. Il était accompagné du Conseiller ministériel, Dr; Herbert LINDBER, du ministère de l'Intérieur qui était responsable, comme médecin, de l'exécution des aliénés. Celui-ci émit l'idée de brûler les cadavres plutôt que de les enterrer. Il est possible qu'une génération nous succède qui ne nous comprendra pas trop bien". Là-dessus GLOBOCNIK aurait répondu Messieurs, si jamais une génération doit nous succéder qui ne comprendrait pas notre grand devoir si nécessaire, il faut vraiment croire que tout notre national-socialisme a été inutile. Je suis au contraire d'avis qu'il faudrait enterrer en même temps que les cadavres des tablettes de bronze sur lesquelles il serait inscrit que c'est nous qui avons

et le courage de mener à bien cette oeuvre si importante et si indispensable". HITLER répondit: "Oui, GLOBOCNIK, ceci est également mon opinion".

Néanmoins, quelque temps après, c'est l'avis du Dr. LINDEN qui domina. Même les cadavres déjà enterrés furent brûlés sur des grilles fabriquées avec des rails à l'aide d'escarpe et d'huiles lourdes.

Les bureaux de ces usines étaient à Lublin dans ce qu'on appelle la "Caserne JULIUS-SCHRECK".

On me présente aux messieurs qui s'y trouvent le jour suivant. Nous allons avec la voiture du Cne WIRTH à Balice; une petite gare spéciale est aménagée tout près de la route, à proximité d'une colline de sable jaune. Au sud de la route se trouvent quelques bâtiments avec l'inscription "Kommando spécial" des Waffen SS de Balice.

GLOBOCNIK me met en rapport avec le remplaçant de WIRTH, le SS Hauptsturmführer OBERMEYER de Pirmasens.

Avec une discrétion remarquable, celui-ci me fit faire le tour du propriétaire.

Derrière d'épaissees rangées de fil de fer barbelé, tout de suite après la gare, se trouve d'abord une grande baraque avec l'inscription "Vestiaire". A l'intérieur, il y a un grand guichet sur lequel il est marqué: "Dépot d'or et d'objets de valeur". Vient ensuite une chambre avec environ 100 lits, le "salon de coiffure". Ensuite, une allée bordée d'arbres d'environ 150 m. bordée à droite et à gauche de fil de fer barbelé double avec une inscription "Vers les locaux d'inhalation et de bains". Nous nous trouvons alors devant un bâtiment ~~comme~~ comme une maison de bains avec un petit escalier devant en fer forgé. Sur le bâtiment, une grande pancarte avec l'inscription: "fondation HECKENHOLT". Je n'ai pas vu davantage est après-midi. Seulement les chambres à gaz viennent à droite du couloir se trouvant dans la "maison de bains". A droite et à gauche trois chambres comme des garages 5 m sur 3 et 1,90 m. de haut. Je ne vois pas de mort est après-midi mais partout, même sur la route règne une puanteur irrespirable, pestilentielle, indescriptible de cadavre. Des millions de mouches volaient en l'air.

Le lendemain quelques minutes avant 7 heures, je suis prévenu "Tout de suite, le premier transport doit arriver". Effectivement, à 7 heures frappantes, un train avec 45 wagons vient de Lemberg; derrière les orifices garnis de fil de fer barbelé, on aperçoit des enfants d'une pâleur effroyable, aussi quelques hommes et quelques femmes avec les traits déformés par la frayeur.

200 Ukrainiens arrachent les portes et avec leurs fouets en cuir, fouettent les gens hors des wagons. 6.700 personnes, dont 1.450 sont déjà mortes à leur arrivée. Un haut parleur donne les instructions: "Se déshabiller complètement, se débarrasser également des lunettes et des prothèses (un garde dit à une jeune fille: déposez tranquillement vos lunettes, vous en aurez d'autres à l'intérieur), déposez les objets de

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valoir au guichet sans bon ou quitance. Un prisonnier juif de trois ans reçoit une brassée de ficelles qu'il distribue péniblement aux autres c'est destiné à lier les chaussures, car jamais personne ne pourrait retrouver les paires assorties dans le tas haut de 35 à 40 mètres. Ensuite les femmes et les jeunes filles passent au "coiffeur". Avec 2 ou 3 coups de ciseaux, les cheveux sont coupés et disparaissent dans de grands sacs de paille de terre.

Un Unterscharführer de service me dit: "C'est destiné à un usage spécial pour l'isolement de sous-marins". A ce moment déjà je prédis à tout le monde que bientôt ces sous-marins cesseront de roder en mer car l'armée la plus efficace doit perdre son mordant si elle a été souillée avec des fleuves de sang innocent.

En fait, les événements m'ont donné raison peu de temps après.

Le train de la mort se met alors en mouvement; en tête une jeune fille ravissante. Il descend l'allée. Tous nus, hommes, femmes, enfants; parmi eux, soutenus à droite et à gauche les hommes qui ont été obligés de déposer leurs prothèses.

Je me trouve avec le Capitaine WIRTH en haut de la rampe entre les chambres de la mort. Des mères avec leurs nourrissons aux seins, des petits enfants nus, des adultes, des enfants, des femmes, tous, pâle-male, nus, ils montent lentement. Ensuite, ils entrent dans les chambres de mort, poussés par ceux qui se trouvent derrière eux qui sont actionnés par les fouets des SS.

Dans un coin de l'allée se trouve un gros SS avec un visage de bull-dog qui est entouré par ces malheureux. D'une voix pastorale il leur dit: "Il ne vous arrive rien du tout. Vous devez seulement respirer à fond à l'intérieur des chambres, les inhalations sont indispensables à cause des épidémies et des maladies et cela vous fera du bien aux poumons". Sur la question "que va-t-il nous arriver?" il répond "Ja, naturellement les hommes doivent travailler, construire des maisons, des routes, mais les femmes n'ont pas besoin de travailler seulement si elles veulent, elles peuvent aider dans les usines et à la cuisine".

Pour quelques uns parmi ces malheureux, cette leur d'espoir est suffisante pour leur faire faire quelques pas jusque dans les chambres sans résistance, mais la majorité sait ce qui l'attend. L'odeur les a renseignés sur leur sort. Ainsi ils montent le petit escalier et voient toute l'installation. La majorité sans dire un mot réagit comme un mouton qu'on mène à l'abattoir. Une juive d'environ 40 ans avec des yeux flamboyants, appelle sur la tête des assassins tout le sang innocent versé ici par l'assassinat le plus lâche qui se vit jamais. C'est le Capitaine WIRTH personnellement qui la frappe 5 ou 6 fois de son fouet au visage. Elle disparaît à son tour dans la chambre. Quelques uns se tournent vers moi: "O, Monsieur, aidez-nous, aidez-nous". Beaucoup prient. Je ne peux pas encore leur donner d'aide. X Je prie avec eux je m'enfonce dans un coin et je crie vers leur dieu et vers mon dieu à haute voix.

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à haute voix. Je ne puis me le permettre, il y a assez de bruit autour de moi. Avec quelle joie ne serais-je allé vers eux dans cette chambre, avec quelle joie ne serais-je mort de leur mort. En trouvant dans leur chambre un officier des SS en uniforme, les assassins n'auraient jamais supposé que cela pouvait être une protestation de ma part. Ils avaient considéré comme un accident et non épitaphe aurait été: "Mort pour son Führer bien-aimé, en exécution de son devoir important pour le Führer".

Non, cela ne va pas, je n'ai pas encore le droit de céder à la tentation de mourir avec ces gens. J'en suis assez. WIRTH ne l'a dit: "Il n'y a pas dix personnes qui ont vu ce que j'ai vu et qui le verront; le personnel étranger auxiliaire sera exécuté à la fin. Je suis un des 5 hommes qui ont vu toutes ces installations. Il n'y en a certainement pas un, à part moi, qui voit cela comme adversaire, comme ennemi de cette bande d'assassins, donc je dois vivre encore et hurler ce que j'ai vu ici. En vérité cela doit être beaucoup plus difficile, je dois vivre et désigner.

Les chambres se remplissent; "Chargez bien" a ordonné le capitaine WIRTH. Ils se marchent sur les pieds les uns sur les autres. De 700 à 800 êtres humains sur 24 25m2, sur 45m3. Je récapitule, plus de la moitié sont des enfants, poids moyen ~~environ~~ en maximum 30 kgs. Poids spécifiques 1, donc 25,250 kgs d'homme par chambre. WIRTH a raison, avec l'aide des SS, 750 personnes peuvent être casées en 45m3 et les SS aident avec leurs fouets et enfournent autant que cela est physiquement possible. Les portes se ferment. Pendant ce temps, les autres attendent dehors, nus. Entre temps, le 2ème transport est arrivé. On me dit: "Naturellement ils attendent nus dehors même par mauvais temps, même en hiver". Je n'ai jusqu'à présent rien demandé, je parais m'y intéresser, mais un mot m'échappe bêtement: "Ils vont attrapper la mort" "Ils sont bien là pour ça", me dit un SS dans son patois. En un éclair je comprends aussi pourquoi toute cette installation s'appelle "Fondation HOCKELCHOC". HOCKELCHOC est le chauffeur du Diesel. Un petit technicien et travailleur infatigable selon WIRTH, il a déjà acquis des mérites impérissables lors de l'exécution des aliénés par son ardeur et sa fertilité en idées. Il est aussi le constructeur de toute l'installation, avec les vapeurs de son Diesel, toutes ces êtres humains doivent mourir. Mais la machine Diesel ne fonctionne pas. On me dit que ceci est assez rare.

WIRTH arrive. On voit qu'il lui est pénible que cela se fasse juste aujourd'hui où je suis là. Oups je vois tout et j'entends tout: ma montre a tout bien enregistré, 50 minutes, 70 minutes, le Diesel ne démarre pas; l'humanité attend dans ces chambres en vain. On les entend pleurer et sangloter "comme à la Synagogue" remarque le professeur FRANKENSTEIN qui a collé l'oreille contre la porte en bois. Le capitaine WIRTH frappe du fouet l'Ukrainien qui doit aider HOCKELCHOC au démarrage du Diesel.

Après 2 heures 49 minutes, mon chronomètre l'a bien enregistré, le Diesel démarre. Jusqu'à cet instant ces êtres humains vivent dans les chambres déjà remplies 4 fois 750 êtres dans 4 fois 45 mètres 3.

A nouveau 25 minutes se passent. Il est vrai que beaucoup sont déjà morts; on voit cela à travers la petite fenêtre éclairant un instant la chambre de lumière électrique. WIRTH m'a interviewé à fond pour savoir si j'estime préférable de laisser mourir ces gens dans une salle obscure ou claire. Il demande cela sur le même ton que l'on demande: "Préférez-vous dormir avec ou sans coussin", "aimez-vous le café avec ou sans lait".

26 minutes plus tard, rares sont ceux qui vivent encore. Enfin,

après 32 minutes tout est mort; on me dit que cela est le temps normal pour tuer.

De l'autre côté des hommes du commando de travail ouvrent les portes en bois. Deux, juifs également, ont eu la promesse d'avoir la liberté et un certain pourcentage de tous les objets de valeur trouvés. Trois comptables tiennent un livre avec une exactitude scrupuleuse et calculent ce pourcentage.

Comme des statues de marbre, les morts se tiennent pressés les uns aux autres. Dans la chambre il n'y a pas de place pour tomber ou même pour se pencher. Même dans la mort on peut reconnaître les familles; ils se tiennent les mains raidies par la mort et il est difficile de les arracher les uns aux autres pour libérer les chambres, pour la charge prochaine.

Les cadavres nus et humides par la transpiration et l'urine, du sang de menstruation aux jambes, salis d'excréments, sont jetés au dehors, des corps d'enfants traversent l'air; il n'y a pas de temps à perdre. Les foudres des Ukrainiens tombent sur le dos du commando de travail. 2 douzaines de dentistes ouvrent les bouches avec des crochets et cherchent de l'or. Or à droite, à gauche. D'autres dentistes avec des pinces et des marteaux arrachent les dents en or des mâchoires. Le chef WIRTH sautille parmi tout cela, il est dans son élément. Quelques ouvriers contrôlent les organes génitaux et les anus pour chercher de l'or, des brillants, ou des objets de valeur. WIRTH me fait signe "Soulèvez voir cette boîte de conserves avec des dents en or, ce n'est que d'hier et d'avant-hier". Avec une vulgarité extraordinaire, il me dit: "Vous ne pouvez pas vous imaginer ce que l'on trouve tous les jours comme or et comme brillants, mais regarder" et il me conduit vers un bijoutier chargé d'administrer tous ces trésors, et me montre tout cela. 2 grosses pièces de 20 dollars semblent particulièrement plaire à WIRTH qui les fait disparaître dans sa poche.

On me montre également un ancien chef d'une grande maison d'achats à Berlin. On fait jouer de son instrument un petit violoniste. C'est un ancien capitaine de l'armée autrichienne, propriétaire de la croix de fer de 1ère classe. Tous les deux sont chefs du commando de travail juif.

Les cadavres nus furent jetés quelques mètres plus loin, dans des fossés de 100 x 12 x 20 mètres. Quelques jours après, ces cadavres enflent et s'effondrent fortement ensuite, ce qui permet de les recouvrir d'une nouvelle couche, 10 cm de sable environ sont jetés par dessus; il n'y a plus que quelques bras et quelques têtes qui sortent. Le jour de ma visite, 2 transports sont montés avec environ 12.500 personnes arrivent à Belzec.

Cette "usine" fonctionne depuis avril 1942 et "fabrique" environ 11.000 morts par jour. Lorsque le cercle de nos amis ou moi-même entendions l'annonce de Londres ou la Voix de l'Amérique nous étions souvent surpris par les anges innocents qui parlaient de centaines de milliers de morts alors qu'en réalité il y avait déjà plus de DIX MILLIONS.

Dans l'année 1943, la Résistance hollandaise me fit dire par UBBINK que j'étais prié de ne pas fournir d'extrémités invétérées, mais de me contenter de reproduire la stricte vérité; malgré mes indications de ces choses, en Août 1942, auprès de l'Ambassade suédoise à Berlin, on se refusa à croire ces chiffres. Malheureusement j'en réponds sous serment, ces chiffres sont exacts.

D'après mes documents certains j'estime le nombre des êtres humains sans défense assassinés par Adolf HITLER et Heinrich HIMMLER à ...

à environ 20 millions. Il ne s'agit pas évidemment seulement des 5 ou 6 millions de Juifs d'Europe qui ont été ainsi assassinés, mais encore de toute l'intelligence tchèque et de l'élite d'autres peuples comme des Serbes qui suivront le même chemin. Ensuite les Polonais, les plus nombreux et d'un petit nombre de tchèques no. 3; il s'agit de ce que l'on appelle les "inutiles biologiques" qui, selon l'avis de la S.S. n'avaient plus le droit d'exister puisqu'ils ne pouvaient plus travailler.

Des commissions de soi-disant médecins, équipés de magnifiques voitures et d'un équipement de sorcellerie médicale, voyageaient de village en village, de ville en ville et osculaient toute la population en manteau blanc, le stéthoscope à la main. Qui ne semblait pas capable de travailler, sur un simple coup d'oeil, était mis sur la liste des inutilés et était cherché quelque temps après et exécuté.

Ce sont les jeunes gens chers à HITLER qui ont jugé, qui très souvent n'avaient même de sang bouillant, pas encore subi une formation d'école primaire et qui se congratulaient de "chers collègues" et de "K. le Professeur".

"Sans ces mesures, me dit un Sturmbannführer à Lublin, toute la Pologne serait sans valeur pour nous, car elle est trop surpeuplée et trop malade. Nous faisons seulement ce que la nature fait partout ailleurs et ce qu'elle oublie malheureusement chez les autres êtres humains."

Même un garde chasse me confirme que l'élimination des faibles et des aliénés est justifiée cette mesure avec beaucoup de conviction. Pour beaucoup cela devenait tellement naturel et indiscutable qu'il devenait difficile de discuter avec une grande partie de l'élite.

WIRTH me demande de ne pas proposer à Berlin de modifications dans les méthodes de mort dans les chambres à gaz employées jusqu'à présent car elles ont fait leurs preuves (sic). Ce qui est curieux c'est que l'on ne m'a posé aucune question à Berlin.

J'ai fait enterrer l'acide prussique exporté.

Le lendemain, 19 Aout 1942, la voiture du Capitaine WIRTH nous conduit à Treblinka, 120 kms nord-nord-est de Varsovie. L'installation est à peu près semblable mais beaucoup plus importante que celle de Belzec. 8 chambres à gaz et plusieurs montagnes de valises, de textiles et de linge.

En notre honneur, un festin vraiment luxueux, dans le plus pur style, vieux germanique, est donné dans la salle commune. Le repas est simple mais tout est à la disposition de tout le monde en quantité illimitée. HITLER lui-même a donné l'ordre de donner à volonté aux hommes de ce kommando autant de viande, de beurre, et surtout d'alcool qu'ils le désirent. Le Pr. PFANNSTIEL tient un discours, soulignant l'importance et l'utilité du devoir de ces hommes. Se tournant vers moi, il parle de méthodes "très humaines" et de "beauté du travail". Cela semble invraisemblable, mais je garantis que PFANNSTIEL, lui-même père de 5 enfants ne parlait ni en plaisantant, ni ironiquement, mais qu'il traitait comme médecin cette chose avec un sérieux absolu. Plus de la moitié des assassinés étaient des enfants; le temps normal pour tuer après le transport et l'attente si pénible était de 32 minutes. PFANNSTIEL disait encore aux hommes du kommando: "En voyant ces corps de Juifs, ces lamentables figures, on comprend encore mieux combien notre devoir provoquera de reconnaissance".

Au départ plusieurs kilogs de beurre et de nombreuses bouteilles de liqueur nous sont offerts pour être exportés. J'ai grand peine à refuser ces choses en argumentant que, soi-disant, j'en disposais amplement. Très heureux FRANKENSTEIN empoche encore mes portions. Nous retournons en voiture à VARSOVIE. Au départ nous voyons encore un groupe de Juifs au travail qui s'active dans une des fosses communes sur un tas de cadavres " on avait oublié de deshabiller ceux des arrivants qui étaient déjà morts naturellement, il faut rattraper cela, à cause des objets de valeur et des vêtements " m'explique le Cne WERTH. A VARSOVIE, attendant en vain un wagon-lit, je rencontre le secrétaire de la légation de l'Ambassade suédoise à BERLIN, le Baron von OTTER dans le train ; encore sous l'impression fraîche de mes aventures effroyables, je lui ai tout raconté avec la prière expresse de communiquer immédiatement tout cela à son Gouvernement et aux Alliés car, chaque jour de retard coûte la vie à d'autres dizaines de milliers. Je lui dis : " Si les Alliés envoyaient à la place de nombreuses bombes, des millions de brochures et de tracts intelligents et bien faits en informant le peuple allemand de tout ce qui se passe, il est probable que dans quelques semaines ou mois, le peuple allemand en finirait avec Adolf HITLER ".

Le Baron von OTTER m'a demandé des références car cette conversation était pour lui, en tant que diplomate, très délicate. Je lui indiquai le Dr DIEBELIUS à BERLIN, Brudersweg 2, 2, est membre éminent de la résistance protestante, ami intime de mon ami, le Pasteur NIEMOLLER, à ce moment à DACHAU.

J'ai revu le Baron von OTTER à deux reprises à la légation suédoise. Entre temps, il a rendu compte personnellement à STOCKHOLM et me dit que son rapport a eu une influence considérable sur les relations suédo-allemandes. Quelques jours plus tard pour soulager ma conscience, et pour avoir fait tout ce qui est en mon pouvoir, j'ai essayé de rendre compte au Nonce du Pape à BERLIN ; dès mes premières paroles, on me demande si je suis soldat ; la-dessus toute conversation avec moi est refusée et je suis prié de quitter immédiatement la légation de Sa Sainteté.

Je dis cela uniquement pour prouver combien il était difficile, même pour un Allemand ennemi impitoyable du nazisme de trouver une voie pour discréditer un Gouvernement criminel.

Dans cette situation où tous les jours des dizaines et des dizaines de milliers attendaient l'assassinat, ou une attente de quelques heures seulement ne semblait criminelle, si dans cette situation, dis-je, un représentant quel de Jésus sur terre refuse toute conversation avec moi, que peut-on demander à un citoyen moyen contre le nazisme ? Que doit-il faire lui qui ne connaît ces erreurs, en général, à peine de oui-dire ? Lui qui, comme des millions d'étrangers (telle la Résistance hollandaise) tient ces choses pour terriblement exagérées, qui ne dispose pas de mon habileté, qui n'a peut-être aucune occasion telle que moi d'écouter la radio étrangère, que doit-il faire contre le Nazi ? Si même le représentant du Pape en Allemagne se refuse à écouter des informations de cette importance extraordinaire sur cette violation unique contre la base de la loi de Jésus " Tu dois aimer ton prochain comme toi-même ".

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Terriblement déçu et abattu, je quitte la légation où je n'ai pu trouver conseil ni aide. À peine sorti, je suis suivi par un policier ; quelques minutes plus tard, un agent cycliste me suit aussi. J'ai passé des minutes d'immense désespoir et de déception : j'ai enlevé le cran de sûreté de mon revolver dans ma poche et je venais mentalement de me préparer au suicide. L'incompréhensible s'est produit ; le policier me frôla à 50 cm près, arrêta un instant et s'en alla. À partir de ce jour risquant à chaque heure ma vie, j'ai rendu compte de ces morts atroces à des centaines de personnes influentes : à la famille HIRSCHMANN, à l'Attaché de Presse de la Légation Suisse à BERLIN, Dr HOCHSTRASSER, au syndic de l'Évêque Catholique de BERLIN, Dr WINTER en demandant une transmission à l'Évêque et au Pape, au Dr. DIBBELS et à beaucoup d'autres ainsi des milliers ont été informés par moi. Je dois ajouter que GUENTHER du R.S.H.A. (je crois qu'il s'agit du fils du GUENTHER des Etudes raciales) m'a demandé, au début 1944, de grosses quantités d'acide prussique. Le poison devait être livré à son bureau dans la Kurfürstendamm à BERLIN et être conservé dans un hangar qu'il me montrait. Il s'agissait de très grosses quantités, ensemble de plusieurs wagons qui devaient être entassés peu à peu et tenues à sa disposition. Ce poison suffisait pour tuer plusieurs millions d'humains qui ainsi auraient disparu sans beaucoup de bruit. GUENTHER me disait qu'il ne savait pas encore où, quand, comment, dans quel but, pour quel milieu ce poison devait être utilisé. En tous cas, il devait être constamment disponible. J'ai déduit de plusieurs questions techniques de GUENTHER qu'une partie, tout au moins, de ce poison, devait être utilisée pour supprimer une grande quantité d'hommes dans des clubs et des salles de lecture. D'après les maigres indications je supposais qu'il s'agissait d'officiers ou de prêtres, en tous cas de gens cultivés et le poison devait être employé à BERLIN même.

Avant visiter les lieux à fond, je déclare à GUENTHER que je ne peux prendre la responsabilité de stocker de pareilles quantités de poison à cet endroit, dans la capitale, puisqu'il y avait assez pour tuer deux fois le nombre de tous les habitants. Avec beaucoup de difficultés, j'obtins la conservation de ce poison à ORANIENBURG et à AUSCHWITZ, dans les camps de concentration. Je m'arrange ensuite de façon à faire supprimer le poison dès l'arrivée, à moi-même, pour la désinfection. Les factures de la firme ayant livré, la Société Allemande pour la lutte contre les Parasites, à FRANZFORT et à FRIEDBERG, ont été établies, sur ma demande, à mon nom moi-même pour mieux garder le secret ; en réalité pour mieux faire disparaître ce poison. Pour cette raison j'évite de présenter au paiement les nombreuses factures courantes pour ne pas rappeler constamment au S.D. et au R.S.H.A. les grosses quantités de poison qui devaient être disponibles. Je fais patienter la firme et laisse les factures non payées. Le Directeur de cette maison, le Dr. PETERS m'a dit, au cours d'une conversation qu'il a livré de l'acide prussique en ampoules pour l'exécution d'êtres humains. Je n'ai jamais su exactement quel était le milieu que GUENTHER devait encore détruire sur ordre de son chef HEIMANN. D'après les quantités, j'ai pensé d'abord aux occupants des camps de concentration, c'est pour cela que j'ai répondu négativement au fils Jochen du Pasteur HIRSCHMANN sur la question : reverra-t-il jamais son père vivant ? L'ordre de HIRSCHMANN de tuer tous les occupants des camps de concentration au besoin, était à prévoir

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a gaz et dans des voitures a gaz (chambres a gaz mobiles) a AUSCHWITZ seuls, des millions d'enfants ont ete tues par un ton d'acide, jusqu'ici nous le voyons, dans le camp de concentration de RAVENSBRUCK.

J'ai assiste a ces essais sur des etres vivants executes par le Dr. GUEDLACH Hauptsturmfuehrer, sur ordre du S.S. Gruppenfuehrer, Professor Dr. GEBHART Hohenlychen.

Les essais sur les femmes etant, en quelque sorte, encore plus repugnants et odieux que dans les camps de concentration pour hommes, au moins, aux hommes on disait honnetement : Fais attention, tu vas recevoir une piqûre et tu vas crever ; au camp de concentration pour femmes de RAVENSBRUCK, on procedait autrement : Voila, Mme MEYER, nous venons de constater que vous avez un abcès au foie, on va vous faire suivre une cure de quelques piqûres et vous allez voir que votre etat va bien s'ameliorer. Ce qu'il y avait de plus horrible, etait le cynisme et la bêtise ironique avec laquelle tout cela se faisait. C'est tout est un veritable concours partant de l'Etoile de David sur les chambres mortuaires et allant jusqu'a ces diagnostics humoristiques.

Quotidiennement, des experiences ont ete faites a BUCHENWALD sur des centaines de detenus avec de 1 a 100 tablettes de parvitine d'autre part, injections de typhus. HIMMLER se reservait lui-meme l'autorisation de pareilles experiences exercees sur des personnes condamnées a mort par le S.D. Les comptes-rendus de ces essais etaient tous centralises dans mon bureau.

Le Stabschefuehrer HOFMEIER les donnait regulierement.

Un autre jour, a DRAKLENBURG, j'ai vu disparaître sans traces des milliers de paderistes dans un fourneau.

A MATHAUSEN, il etait courant de faire disparaître des Juifs dans des carrieres en les faisant tomber de haut.

Ce qu'il y a de curieux, c'est que ces "accidents de travail" etaient toujours prévus quelques minutes auparavant par des gardes.

Le S.S. Hauptsturmfuehrer, Dr. Fritz KRAATZ, chef de mission aupres du Bureau S.S. du Reich, m'a rendu compte de ces faits avec un sinceresse et a rendu publiques ces choses. KRAATZ est un ennemi fanatique des Nazis.

A BELCEC, j'avais l'impression le jour de mon inspection, qu'après une si longue attente dans les chambres, tout le monde etait vraiment mort ; par contre, le Chef MEYER, un etre sans aucune instruction et sans aucune notion de chimie et de physiologie m'a raconte les choses les plus etranges apparemment. MEYER etait doué d'un amour particulier pour les essais divers pour mener les gens de vie a trépas. Il me parlait ainsi d'un petit enfant qu'ils ont trouve un matin dans une chambre a gaz qui n'avait pas ete vidée la veille et qui etait parfaitement vivant et gai.

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VIRTH se serait livré à des expériences particulièrement intéressantes sur des faibles d'esprit ; c'est sur eux que l'on pouvait expérimenter le mieux les divers degrés de sensibilité. Des essais ont également été faits à l'aide d'air comprimé ; des gens ont été mis dans de vieilles bouilloires remplies à l'aide de compresseur, d'air comprimé. A TRZELINIA, j'avais l'impression que certains vivaient encore et étaient seulement sans connaissance, ce qui n'excluait pas qu'au cours de la nuit, ils pourraient se ramener et souffrir un nouveau martyre jusqu'à la mort définitive.

Presque tous avaient les yeux ouverts et offraient un aspect effroyable. Malgré mon observation appliquée, je n'ai pas pu ~~observer~~ observer de mouvement. Dans l'ensemble, on ne s'est pas donné la moindre peine de faire ces exécutions de façon humaine et tel est qu'on ait le droit d'employer ce mot par rapport à ces faits. Tout cela a été fait moins par sadisme que par indifférence totale et commodité.

Le Hauptsturmführer DR. VILLING de DORTMUND m'a parlé d'une chose qui l'a particulièrement impressionné : environ 2,000 cléricaux polonais ont été obligés de creuser des fosses ; ils devaient ensuite se déshabiller, se placer devant ces fosses et furent fusillés nus. Sur les questions ironiques s'ils croyaient toujours à Jésus-Christ, à Marie et à leur peuple polonais, ils répondirent avec une affirmation de foi serene qu'ils croyaient plus que jamais au Christ, à la Sainte Vierge de Dieu et à une résurrection de leur peuple.

VILLING me parlait de cela avec émotion.

D'autres Polonais sont morts de la même façon exemplaire, surtout des instituteurs et des institutrices. En attendant parler de tout cela, je me suis souvenu de ma propre prison dans la Buchsenstrasse à STUTTGART ; une main inexpérimentée avait gravé dans le métal de mon lit : " Prie, la Vierge de Dieu aide ". Ce ci a été pour moi dans des jours pénibles une grande consolation et ma cellule me semblait une petite Eglise. Je salue avec reconnaissance ce frère inconnu qui m'a envoyé ce signe et est encouragé dans ma peine profonde. Que Dieu le récompense.

Un autre moyen de tuer du monde en Pologne était de faire monter les personnes en haut d'échelles de hauts-fourneaux et les jeter à l'intérieur après les avoir tués d'un coup de pistolet. Beaucoup d'autres auraient disparu dans des fours à briques, étouffés par les gaz et brûlés. Dans ces cas, je ne dispose pas d'une source absolument garantie.

Un des chefs de la police de BRZESKA, le E. S. Sturmbannführer HALLER racontait au médecin qui suivait le cours avec moi qu'il était d'usage à son arrivée à BRZESKA de prendre les enfants Juifs par les pieds et de leur casser la tête contre le mur de leur appartement, pour éviter le bruit de la fusillade. Il aurait fait cesser ce non-sens et aurait obtenu la fusillade de ces enfants. Il aurait trouvé particulièrement pénible d'exister, lui-même, au fait de deux petites filles de 5 et de 8 ans, tombant à genoux et priant. Naturellement, conclut HALLER il fallait ensuite que je les fasse fusiller également. Il nous parla également de l'exécution des intellectuels polonais ; ils étaient contraints de faire leur tombe, de s'y coucher sur le ventre et furent fusillés avec le pistolet mitrailleur ; les suivants étaient obligés de se coucher sur les cadavres chauds et furent fusillés à leur tour ; certains, pas encore morts,

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ont été fusillés au cours de leur tentative de sortie entre les diverses couches.

Un des chefs du Gouvernement allemand de KRAKAU m'a parlé en découvrant une dinde d'une prise particulièrement bonne qu'il avait faite : un homme de la résistance polonaise, un Juif, avait refusé de parler, alors on lui avait brisé les poignets ; il continuait de se taire ; là-dessus, on l'a fait assoir sur une plaque de fer chauffée à blanc. "Vous auriez du voir, me dit-il, ce que ça l'a rendu bavard".

Lors d'une visite à un bureau de construction de la Waffen S.S. à LUBLIN, les deux architectes me faisaient part d'une visite qu'ils avaient faite la veille à la morgue d'un camp de prisonniers de guerre, en vue de l'agrandir. "Des milliers de cadavres, en général de typhiques, ont été entassés là brusquement ; ils se sont aperçus que certains ramuaient encore ; le Rottenführer qui portait la clef, s'est contenté de demander calmement : "Ou ça ?" puis a pris un marteau de fer rond tout près, et a enfoncé le crâne des personnes indiquées. "Ce n'est pas le fait lui-même qui a étonné les architectes, mais le naturel avec lequel le geste a été exécuté.

Lors de ma visite à BELGEC, une Juive avait coupé plusieurs des Juifs de travail, à l'aide d'un rasoir caché. WIRTH regrettait vivement que cette femme soit déjà morte, car elle aurait dû être punie de façon exemplaire.

Les Juifs blessés ont été parfaitement soignés par lui, pour leur faire croire qu'ils auraient la vie sauve et qu'ils seraient récompensés, "et il croient cela, ces idiots", s'écrie WIRTH en riant.

Ce qui était particulièrement repugnant à BELGEC, était le concours organisé entre les hommes et les garçons de transport pour trainer les effets d'habillement vers les wagons. Celui qui travaille le mieux fait partie de l'équipe de travail. Ainsi est constitué un concours pour la vie et la mort entre ces étres nus qui transportent les vêtements sous les rires des S.S. ; naturellement, ils disparaissent tous sans exception, dans les chambres à gaz ; seuls, quelques étres très vieux et très malades qui, même soutenus par les autres, ne peuvent se trainer jusqu'aux chambres étaient déposés à part et fusillés.

Quelques images particulièrement saisissantes ne me quittent plus : le garconnet juif de 3 ans qui, revêtu, distribue les morceaux de ficelle pour lier les paires de souliers. Même cet enfant a été inconsciemment mis à contribution dans la machine de mort épouvantable de HITLER.

Je pense aussi à une petite fille qui a un mètre de la chambre a perdu son petit collier en corail ; ce collier est retrouvé par un garconnet de 3 ans ; il le ramasse, le considère avec bonheur, s'en rejouit et au moment suivant est poussé, je dois le dire avec douceur, par un gardien conservant un reste de sentiment, à l'intérieur de la chambre.

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Le SS Hauptsturmfuehrer OSSEMEYER m'a raconte l'histoire suivante : dans un village a proximite, il avait rencontre un Juif venant de PIELASINZ, sa ville natale. Pendant la guerre, ce Juif avait ete sous-officier, un tres chic type. Comme enfants, ils jouaient ensemble et memo, il avait sauve la vie, une fois a OSSEMEYER. OSSEMEYER declara qu'il allait prendre maintenant cet homme avec sa femme dans son domaine de travail. Je lui demandai ce qu'il allait devenir plus tard. Il me regarda d'un air etonne, " Que voulez-vous qu'il devienne ? la meme chose que les autres, il n'y a pas d'autre solution, enfin, peut etre que je les ferai fusiller ".

Je dois dire, pour etre juste que j'ai rencontre certains S.S. qui condamnaient formellement ces methodes et sont devenus des adversaires forces du Naziisme. Je pense surtout au Hauptsturmfuehrer HOELLANDER qui m'a toujours mis au courant de tous les secrets et qui a toujours fait disparaître tout ce qui aurait pu etre compromettant pour moi.

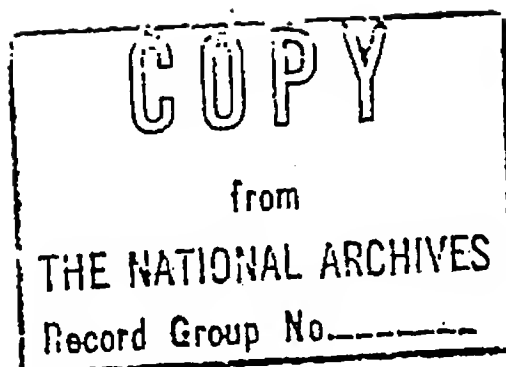
Un autre anti-Nazi etait le Chef de la Section Interieure de l'Hopital de S.S. de ES-LER, le S.S. Sturmbannfuehrer Dr. FOCHT qui depuis 1941, a frequemment critique ouvertement ces methodes en risquant sciemment sa tete. La meme chose est valable pour le chirurgien SS Hauptsturmfuehrer Dr. HISSER de ITECHOE et le Dr. SOFUE de JENA. Les trois pharmacies en chef de la Wehrmacht S.S. BRUNNENBERG, BERGEBURG et RUDOLPHI ont fait partie du groupe des officiers du 20 juillet. Parmi les S.S. hollandais et belges, les 2/3 ont ete executes par force et par ruse sous pretexte de leurs sportifs. S'ils refusaient par la suite, d'obedir, ils etaient immediatement fusilles.

Toute personne qui, memo de l'exterieur, d'un geste imprudent, touchait au personnel d'un camp etait immediatement fusille. Cet ordre venait directement de HITLER et a coute la vie a beaucoup de tout jeunes S.S., sortant de la Hitler Jugend et executes par force aux S.S.

De nombreux appartenant a l'aviation et a la marine ont ete brusquement entres aux S.S. Il serait injuste, malgre la haine tres compréhensible qu'ont decchainee les S.S., de ne pas faire de difference.

Il faut dire ici que, frequemment, la police a ete bien pire que les S.S. Le President de la Croix-Rouge allemande, le S.S. Gruppenfuehrer, Dr. GRAYTZ est un des principaux responsables de la situation des camps de concentration.

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RG 226, Records of the National Archives
Collection of World War II War Crimes

see *Journal* -

Bergassessor a.D. Kurt Gerstein
Diplom-Ingenieur

7-711
Tübingen, Württemberg, den 6. Mai 1945
H.Zt. Rottweil. Hotel Mohren.

Zur Person : G e r s t e i n , Kurt Bergassessor a.D., Diplom-Ingenieur aus dem Staatsdienst entfernt wegen antinationalsozialistischer Betätigung für die Bekenntniskirche (Niemöller) am 27. September 1936. Teilhaber der Firma De Limon Fluhme & Co., Maschinenfabrik für automatische Öl- und Fett-schmieranlagen für Lokomotiven.

Vater: Ludwig E. Gerstein, Landgerichtspräsident a.D., Eagen, Westfalen.

Mutter: Clara Gerstein geb. Schemann, gestorben 1931.

Verheiratet seit 31. August 1937 mit Elfriede Gerstein geb- Eensch in Tübingen. Hartenstrasse 24.

3 Kinder: Arnulf 5 Jahre, Adelheid, 8 1/2 Jahre, Olaf 2 Jahre.

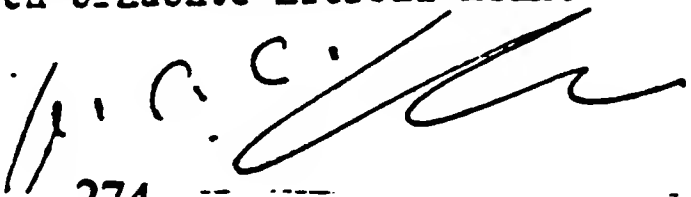
Lebenslauf : 1905 - 1910 in Münster/ Westfalen. 1910 - 1919 in Saarbrücken, 1921 Halberstadt, 1922 - 1925 in Neuruppin bei Berlin, 1925 Abitur an humanistischen Gymnasium Neuruppin.

Studiengang : 1925 - 1927 Universität Marburg: Lehr-, 1927 Aachen, Techn. Hochschule, 1928 - 1931 Technische Hochschule Berlin- Charlottenburg, dort 1931 Diplom-Ingenieur - Examen. Seit 1925 aktives Mitglied der evangelischen Jugend, insbesondere der Bibelkreise an höheren Lehranstalten.

Politische Betätigung: Aktiver Anhänger von Stresemann und Brüning. Seit 1933 seitens der Gestapo wegen staatsfeindlicher Betätigung für die Kirche des christlichen Widerstandes (Bekenntniskirche, Pastor Martin Niemöller) und wegen Fortsetzung der unterdrückten evangelischen Jugendverbände unter dauernder Verfolgung. Am 30. Januar 1935 wegen Protestes gegen die Aufführung des antichristlichen Stückes " Wittenkind " anlässlich einer Partei - Weihefeier in Stadttheater Eagen/ Westfalen verprügelt und verletzt. Am 27. November 1935 Bergassessor - Examen beim Wirtschaftsministerium. Anschließend Beamter der Saargruben - Verwaltung in Saarbrücken. Am 27. September 1936 Verhaftung aus dem Dienstzimmer heraus durch die Gestapo wegen Versendung von 8500 antinationalsozialistischer Broschüren an sämtliche Staats- und Ministerialräte sowie an alle höheren Justizbeamten. Aus der Beschuldigungsschrift

" wird wegen staatsfeindlicher Betätigung trotz immer wieder erfolgter Verwarnung wegen eines konzentrischen, Systematischen und organisierten literarischen Massenangriffs gegen den nationalsozialistischen Staat in Schutzhaft genommen " ----- In Erfüllung eines Lieblingswunsches studierte ich alsdann nach meiner Entfernung aus dem Staatsdienst an evangelischen Deutschen Institut für Erztliche Mission in Tübingen Medizin. Als Teilhaber der Firma De Limon Fluhme & Co. war ich bei einem Jahreseinkommen von rd. RM 18 000,- (Reichsmark) wirtschaftlich frei und unabhängig. Ein Drittel meines Einkommens pflegte ich seit 1931 für meine religiösen Ideale auszugeben. Ich ließ auf meine Kosten 250 000 antinationalsozialistische und religiöse Broschüren drucken und verteilte oder versandte sie auf meine Kosten. Am 14. Juli 1938. Am 14. Juli 1938 erfolgte meine zweite Verhaftung durch die Geheime Staatspolizei und SD Stuttgart und meine Verbringung zunächst ins Gefängnis, dann in das Konzentrationslager Wolsheim wegen staatsfeindlicher Betätigung. Vorher war ich zwei Dutzend mal durch die Gestapo und den SD verhört und verwarnet worden. Ich wurde für das ganze Reichsgebiet mit einem Redeverbot belegt, das bis zum Ende des Systems aufrecht erhalten blieb.

Als ich von dem Massenmord der Geisteskranken in Hadamar, Grafenrath und andererseits hörte, hatte ich nur noch den einen Wunsch: " Du mußt in diesen ganzen Kassenkessel hineinschauen und das Geschehene unter Einsatz Deines Lebens im Volk bekannt machen! " Ich brauchte hierbei keine



Skrupeln.

krupeln zu haben, da ich selber einmal das Opfer von SS Agenten geworden war, die in den engsten Kreisläufen der Bekennende Kirche sich eingeschlichen hatten und sogar die engsten Gebetsgemeinschaften, dort mit auf die Knie gingen und mitbeteten. Ich dachte mir: Was ihr könnt, das kann ich schon lange und meldete mich freiwillig zum Eintritt in die SS. Dies war so sehr, als meine Schwägerin Bertha Ebeling aus Saarbrücken in Hamburg angebracht worden war. Auf Grund zweier Empfehlungen von Gestapobeamten, die meine Sache bearbeitet hatten, war es mir ein Leichtes, in die Waffen-SS aufgenommen zu werden. Die Herren waren unbedingt der Ansicht, daß ein Idealismus, wie der meine, unbedingt für die NSDAP nutzbar gemacht werden müsse. So zeigten sie mir selbst den Weg, den ich alsdann ging.

Meine Grundausbildung erhielt ich mit 40 Jahren zusammen in Hamburg-Langenhorn, dann in Arnheim-Holland und in Cranicburg. In Arnheim nahm ich durch meinen Studienfreund, den Fabrikanten Ubbink aus Doornburg, Dipl.-Ing., sofort die Fühlung mit der holländischen Widerstandsbewegung auf. Wegen meines Doppelstudiums in Medizin und Technik wurde ich alsbald ins SS-Führungsgenpant, Amtsgruppe D, Sanitätswesen der Waffen-SS, Abteilung Hygiene, berufen. Zugegeben, dieser Betrieb war von einer beachtlichen Großzügigkeit. So wurde es mir völlig selbst überlassen, mir eine Betätigung zu suchen. Ich konstruierte, um einen ganz dringenden Bedürfnis abzuhelfen, Desinfektionsanlagen, fahrbare und lokale, in großer Zahl, namentlich für Gefangenenlager, Konzentrationslager und für die kämpfende Truppe. Ohne mein Verdienst hatte ich hierbei außerordentliche Erfolge und wurde von da ab für ein ganz besonderes technisches Genie gehalten. Ich wurde daher auch für gleichartige Projekte des Ostministeriums und des Reichsarbeitsministeriums häufig herangezogen. Immerhin gelang es in der Tat, die entsetzliche Fleckfieberwelle von 1941, die in den Gefangenen- und Konzentrationslagern zeitweise täglich mehrer zehntausenden an Toten forderte, recht erheblich herabzusetzen. Ich wurde daher sehr bald Leutnant und Oberleutnant. Im Dezember geriet ich nochmals in eine große Gefahr, da das Parteigericht, das meinen Anschluß aus der Partei verfügt hatte, Kenntnis von meinem Eintritt in ein führendes Amt der SS erhielt. Wegen meiner großen Erfolge und wegen meiner allgemeinen Wertschätzung wurde ich jedoch seitens meines Amtes geschützt und gehalten. Im Februar 1942 wurde ich Chef der Abteilung Gesundheitstechnik, die gleichzeitig das Trinkwasserversen und die gesamte technische Desinfektion, auch die mit hochgiftigen Gasen, mit umfaßte.

Am 8. Juni 1942 erhielt ich in meinem Dienstzimmer Besuch von dem SS-Sturmbannführer Günther vom Reichssicherheitshauptamt in der Kurfürstenstrasse. C. kam in Zivil, ich kannte ihn bis dahin nicht. Er gab mir unter allerlei geheimnisvollen Andeutungen den Befehl, ein Quantum Phosphorsäure (- 260 kg -) zu beschaffen und mit diesem Gift mittels eines Kraftwagens des SD, an einen Ort zu fahren, der nur dem Chauffeur bekannt sei. Die Sache lief als eine der zumeist geheimsten Reichssachen. Einige Zeit später fuhr ich mit besagtem Wagen nach Eollin bei Prag. Ich konnte mir die Art des Auftrages ungefähr denken. Ich übernahm ihn jedoch, weil ich mich hier der Zufall an das Ziel führte, in diese gesamte Maschinerie den lang ersehnten Einblick zu erhalten. Ich hatte auch nicht die leisesten Bedenken. Denn wenn ich den Auftrag nicht übernommen hätte, hätte ihn ein anderer im Sinne des SD ausgeführt, während ich als Autorität auf dem Gebiet der hochgiftigen Gase ohne Schwierigkeiten die ganze Ladung — als versetzt oder gefährlich geworden oder verdorben — verschwinden lassen konnte. So konnte nur ich jeden Mißbrauch der Phosphorsäure zur Tötung von Menschen verhindern:

Da.

Da noch ein Platz im Wagen frei war, erklärte ich mich bereit, den SS Obersturmbannführer Prof. Dr. med. Pfannenstiel, Ordinarius für Hygiene an der Universität Marburg/Lahn, mitzunehmen. In Kollin hatte ich in der Fabrik den tschechischen Personal gegenüber durch absichtlich ungeschickte technische Fragen darblicken lassen, daß die Blausäure zum Töten von Menschen bestimmt sei. Ich habe das in Folge stets so gehalten, die beste Art, die Sache im Volk heranzubringen. Prompt wurde in Kollin das Fahrzeug sorgfältig beobachtet. - In Lublin wurden wir durch den SS-Gruppenführer General Globocnik empfangen. Dieser sagte zu uns: Diese Geheime Reichssache ist z.Zt. eine der geheimsten, man kann sagen, die geheimste überhaupt, die es gibt. Jeder der davon schwätzt wird erschossen. Gerade gestern haben wir zwei Schwätzer still gemacht. - Im Augenblick, das war am 17. August - haben wir 3 Anlagen:

1. Belzec, an der Chaussee Lublin- Lemberg im nördlichen Winkel genau an der Stelle wo die Demarkationslinie mit den Russen die Chaussees schneidet. Tagesleistungen etwa 15 000 Tötungen. Durchschnittliche Ausnutzung bisher seit April 11 000 pro Tag.
2. Sobibor, bei Lublin in Polen, ich weiß nicht genau wo. 200 000 Tötungen pro Tag.
3. Treblinka, 120 km NNO von Warschau in Polen, 25 000 Tötungen pro Tag. Durchschnittliche Ausnutzung etwa 13 500 Tötungen pro Tag seit Juni 1942.
4. Maidanek bei Lublin. War damals noch im Aufbau.

Ich habe Belzec, Treblinka und Maidanek in Begleitung des Chefs dieser ganzen Tötungsanlagen, den Polizeihauptmann W i r t h zusammen ausührlich in Betrieb besichtigt. Wirth ist derselbe, der im Auftrage von Hitler und Himmler die Geisteskranken in Hadamar, Grafeneck und anderwärts umgebracht hat.

Globocnik sagte zu uns, d.h. er wendete sich nur an mich: Ihre Aufgabe ist es, die großen Mengen Spindestoffe, Wäsche, Kleidungsstücke und Schuhe, die in den Anlagen anfallen, zu desinfizieren. Die Mengen machen das 10 - 20fache der Ergebnisse der Spindestoffsammlungen aus. Diese ganzen Sammlungen werden in wesentlichen nur deshalb durchgeführt, an den ausländischen Arbeitern und dem deutschen Volk die Herkunft der großen Mengen an Altkleidern einigermaßen plausibel zu machen. - Ihre andere, natürlich noch sehr viel wichtigere Aufgabe ist die, den Betrieb dieser Todesanlagen selbst umzustellen. Die Sache geschieht jetzt mit Diesel- Auspuffgasen von einem alten russischen Dieselmotor. Das muß auf etwa umgestellt werden, was schneller geht, und da denke ich vor allen an Flammkammer-Verfahren. - am 15. August 42 - waren der Führer und Himmler hier. Ich darf den Leuten, die die Anlagen besichtigen müssen, keine Linienansicht anstellen, sondern muß sie um der Geheimhaltung willen persönlich dort abgeben. Darauf fragte Pfannenstiel: "Was hat denn der Führer zu dem ganzen gesagt?" Darauf Globocnik: "Die ganze Aktion soll raschestens durchgeführt werden!" In seiner Begleitung befand sich noch der Ministerialrat Dr. Herbert Linden vom Reichsministerium. Der meinte ob es nicht besser sei, die Leichen zu verbrennen, anstatt sie einzuschütten. Es könnte doch mal nach uns eine Generation kommen, die das ganze nicht versteht. Darauf habe ich Globocnik gesagt: "Meine Herren, wenn ja eine Generation nach uns kommen sollte, die unsere große und so dankbare und nötige Aufgabe nicht verstehen sollte, dann allerdings, ist unser ganzer Nationalsozialismus vergeblich gewesen. Ich bin im Gegenteil der Ansicht, daß man Ehrensteine versenken sollte, auf denen geschrieben ist, daß wir, daß wir es waren, die den Mut gehabt haben, dieses so notwendige und wichtige Werk durchzuführen. - Darauf Hitler: Gut

Globocnik ..

Globocnos, das ist allerdings auch meine Ansicht.- Nachmittags Zeit hat sich dann doch die andere Ansicht durchgesetzt. Die Leichen wurden dann auf improvisierten riesigen Kisten aus Eisenbahnschienen mit Benzin und Dieselöl verbrannt.- Ich mußte dann noch das sehr umfangreiche Betriebsbüro dieser Tötungsanstalten in Lublin in der sogenannten "Julius - Schreck - Kaserne -" besuchen. Am nächsten Tage fahren wir mit dem Auto des Hauptmann Virth nach Belzec. Ein kleiner Sonderbahnhof war hart an einem gelben Sandhügel im Norden sich bei der Chaussee geschaffen worden. Südlich an der Chaussee befanden sich einige Betriebsgebäude mit der Aufschrift: "Sonderkommando Belzec der Waffen SS". Globocnos übergab mich dem SS-Hauptsturmführer Obermayer aus Pransens, der mich mit großer Zurückhaltung die Anlagen sehen ließ. Hinter dichten Reihhecken hart am Bahnhof war zunächst eine große Baracke mit der Aufschrift: "G a r d e r o b e". Dort befand sich ein großer Schalter "Gold und Wertsachen-Abgabe." Dann folgte ein Zimmer mit etwa hundert Hockern, der Friseurraum. Dann eine Eirkemallee von etwa 150 Metern, rechts und links mit doppeltem Stacheldraht umzäunt mit Schildern: "Zu den Inhalier- und Baderäumen!" - Dann stand vor uns ein Gebäude, etwa wie ein Badehaus, mit einem kleinen Treppchen, davon rechts und links je ein großer Eetonpf mit Geranien. Auf dem Dach als Windfahne der Davidstern in Schmiedearbeit.- Vor dem Gebäude eine Inschrift: "Leckenholt - Stiftung." Mehr habe ich an diesem Nachmittag nicht zu sehen bekommen. Insbesondere bekam ich nicht einen Toten zu sehen. Aber über dem ganzen, auch noch über der Chaussee lag ein postartiger Leichengestank und Millionen Fliegen schwirrten überall herum. In den Baderäumen selbst waren rechts und links von einem Flur je 3 Kammern etwa wie Garagen, 5 x 5 Meter groß, 1,90 m hoch, angeordnet. Am anderen Morgen wurde mir wenige Minuten vor 7 Uhr gesagt: Gleich kommt der erste Transport! - In der Tat kam Punkt 7 Uhr ein Zug mit 45 Wagen von Lemberg. Hinter dem mit Stacheldraht vergitterten Loken sah man entsetzlich bleiche Kinder, auch einige Männer und Frauen, mit angstverzerrten Zügen. Der Zug verschwindet hinter der Ecke, 200 Ukrainer reißen die Türen auf und peitschen die Leute mit ihren Lederpeitscher aus dem Zug heraus, 6700 Personen, von denen 1450 bereits bei ihrem Eintreffen tot sind. Ein Lautsprecher gibt die Anweisungen: Sich ganz anziehen, auch Prothesen, Brillen usw. ablegen. (Zu einem Mädchen sagte ein Posten: Nimm Sie die Brille ab, Sie bekommen darin eine andere Brille!) Die Wertsachen an Schalter abgeben, ohne Ben oder Quittung.- Ein kleines Jüdenbubchen kriegt eine Hand voll Binsfäden unter den Arm gedrückt, die das dreijährige Kind verschnen an die Leute anstellt: Zum Zusammenbinden der Schuhe! Dann in den Eanfem von 35 oder 40 Meter Höhe hätte keiner nachher die passenden Schuhe wieder zusammenfinden können.- Dann die Frauen und jungen Mädchen zum Friseur, der mit 2 - 3 Scherenschlägen die Haare herunterschneidet und sie in großen Kartoffelstücken verschwinden läßt. Das ist für irgendwelche Spezialzwecke für U-Boote bestimmt, für Dichtungen oder dergleichen! - sagt mir der Unterscharführer, der dort Dienst tut.- Ich sagte schon damals vielen Leuten voraus, daß diese U-Boote bald nicht mehr fahren würden, weil die noch so einwirkende Waffe stumpf werden müsse, wenn sie mit Strömen menschlichen Blutes besudet würde. Gott würde es irgendwie so einrichten, daß sie nicht mehr f a h r e n! - In der Tat habe ich damit ja auch kurze Zeit später recht behalten! - Dann setzt sich der Zug in Bewegung, Voran ein bildhübscher junger Mädchen, so gehen sie die Allee entlang, alle nackt, Männer, Frauen, Kinder, von beiden Seiten von anderen gestützt, Männer mit Prothesen, die sie haben ablegen müssen.

Ich selbst stehe mit Hauptmann Virth oben auf der Rampe zwischen den Todeskammern. Mitter mit ihren Jünglingen in der Brust, sie kommen herauf, zögern-

dam ..

dann treten sie ein in die Todeskammern.- An der Ecke der Birkenallee steht ein starker älterer SS-Mann, umringt von den Armen. Mit pastoralear Stimm sagt er zu ihnen: Es passiert Euch nicht das Geringste ! Ihr müßt nur in den Kammern tief Atem holen, das weitet die Lungen, diese Inhalation ist notwendig wegen Krankheiten und Seuchen.- Auf die Frage, was mit ihnen geschehen würde, antwortet er : Ja natürlich die Männer müssen arbeiten, Häuser und Chausseebauern, aber die Frauen brauchen nicht zu arbeiten. Nur wenn sie wollen können sie im Betrieb oder in der Küche mithelfen.- Für einige von diesen Armen ein kleiner Hoffnungsschimmer, der ausreicht, daß sie ohne Widerstand die paar Schritte zu den Kammern gehen-, die Mehrzahl weiß Bescheid, der Geruch kündet ihnen ihr Los! So steigen sie die kleine Treppe herauf- und dann sehen sie alles! Mütter mit ihren Säulingen an der Brust, kleine nackte Kinder, Erwachsene, Männer und Frauen, alle nackt durcheinander - sie zögern- aber die treten ein in die Todeskammern, von den anderen hinter ihnen vorgetrieben, oder von den Lederpeitschen der SS getrieben. Die Mehrzahl ohne ein Wort zu sagen. Wie ein Lamm, das zur Schlachtbank geführt wird! Eine Jüding von etwa 40 Jahren mit flammenden Augen ruft : das Blut, das hier geschüttelt wird in dem gemeinsten Mordmord, der je durchgeführt wurde, über die Mörder. Sie erhält 5 oder 6 Schläge mit der Reitpeitsche ins Gesicht, von Hauptmann Wirth persönlich, dann verschwindet auch sie in der Kammer.- Manche wenden sich an mich O Herr helfen sie uns doch, helfen Sie uns doch! - Viele Menschen beten. Ich kann ihnen doch nicht helfen, ich bete mit ihnen, ich drücke mich in eine Ecke und schreie laut zu meinem und ihrem Gott. Es ist laut genug um mich her, ich kann mir das leisten, laut zu meinem Gott zu schreien. Wie gerne wäre ich mit ihnen in die Kammer gegangen, wie gerne wäre ich ihren Tod mitgestorben. Sie hätten dann einen uniformierten SS-Offizier in ihren Kammern vorgefunden, auf einen Protest wären sie garnicht gekommen, sie hätten die Sache als Unglücksfall aufgefaßt, ich wäre gemeldet worden : " In treuen Dienst für seinen geliebten Führer in Erledigung einer großen Aufg. be für den Reichsführer starb im Dienst ..." Nein, so gehts also nicht. Noch darf ich dieser Versuchung, mit diesen Leuten zu sterben, nicht nachgehen. Ich weiß genau: Noch nicht 10 Personen sehen, was ich sehe und gesehen habe, der das ganze hier übersieht, alle Anstalten und ihre Organisation. Sicher noch nicht einer außer mir sieht dies als Gegner, als Feind dieser Mordbande. Ich muß also noch leben und zuvor verkünden, was ich hier erlebe! Gewiß, es ist der viel, viel schwerere Dienst! - Die Kammer füllen sich. Gut verpacken, so hat es der Hauptmann Wirth befohlen. Die Menschen stehen einander auf den Füßen, 700 - 800 Menschen auf 25 Quadratmetern in 45 Kubikmetern. Ich überschlage : Durchschnittsgewicht höchstens 35 kg., mehr als die Hälfte sind Kinder, spez. Gewicht 1. Also 35 250 kg. Menschen pro Kammer, Wirth hat recht, wenn die SS etwas nachhilft, kann man 750 Menschen in 45 Kubikmetern unterbringen! - Und sie hilft nach, mit ihren Reitpeitschen und zwingt sie hinein, soweit es physisch überhaupt geht.- Die Türen schließen sich. Währenddessen warten die anderen draussen im Freien nackt. Inzwischen ist auch der zweite Transport eingetroffen. Man sagt mir selbstverständlich auch im Winter, oder bei kaltem Wetter nackt,! Ja, aber sie können sich ja den Tod holen! - sage ich, der ich sonst verächtlich bin, überhaupt nichts frage, uninteressiert tue, dies Wort rutscht mir raus --. " Ja grad für das sind es ja doch! - sagt mir ein SS-Mann darauf in seinem Platt.-

Jetzt endlich verstehe ich auch warum die ganze Einrichtung " Eckenholt - Stiftung " heißt. Eckenholt ist der Chauffeur des Diesels, ein kleiner Techniker und unermüdlicher Schaffer. Schon bei der Fötung der Geisteskranken hat er sich - nach Wirth unerhörte Verdienste erworben

durch ...

durch seinen Fleiß, seinen Ideenreichtum. Er ist auch der Erbauer der ganzen Anlagen. Mit den Abgasen seines Diesels sollen die Menschen hier zu Tode gebracht werden. Aber der Diesel funktionierte nicht. Das wäre verhältnismäßig selten vor, sagte man mir. - Der Hauptmann Wirth kommt. Man sieht, es ist ihm peinlich, dass das gerade heute passieren muß, wo ich hier bin. Obwohl ich sehe alles! und ich warte. Keine Stoppuhr hat alles brav registriert. 50 Minuten, 70 Minuten - der Diesel springt nicht an! Die Menschen warten in ihren Gaskammern. Vergeblich. Man hört sie weinen, schluchzen. - "Wie in der Synagoge!" bemerkt der Professor Pfannenstiel, das Ohr an der Holztür. Der Hauptmann Wirth schlägt mit der Reitpeitsche den Ukrainer, der dem Eckenholt beim Diesel helfen soll, in's Gesicht. - Nach 2 Stunden 49 Minuten die Stoppuhr hat alles wohl registriert! - springt der Diesel an. Bis zu diesem Augenblick leben die Menschen in diesen bereits gefüllten 4 Kammern, 4 x 750 Menschen in 4 x 45 Kubikmetern! - Von neuen verstreichen 25 Minuten. Richtig viele sind jetzt tot. Man sieht das durch das kleine Fensterchen, in dem das elektrische Licht die Kammer einen Augenblick erleuchtet. Wirth hatte mich eingehend interviewt, ob ich es für richtiger halte, die Leute in den beleuchteten oder in den unbeluchteten Kammer sterben zu lassen. Er fragte das in dem Stiel, in dem man fragt, ob man mit oder ohne Feilkrassen besser schläft. Nach 28 Minuten lebten nur noch wenige. Endlich nach 32 Minuten ist alles tot! - Von der anderen Seite öffnen die Männer vom Arbeitskommando die Holztüren. Man hat ihnen, - selbst Juden! - die Freiheit und einen kleinen Promillesatz von allen gefundenen Werten für ihren schrecklichen Dienst versprochen. Drei Buchhalter führen mit großer Emsigkeit Buch und berechnen unstärklich die Promillesätze. Wie Basaltsäulen stehen die Toten aneinandergepreßt; in den Kammern. Es wäre auch kein Platz hinzufallen oder auch nur sich vorüberzumeigen. Selbst im Tode noch kennt man die Familien. Die drücken sich, in Tode verkrampft, die Hände, sodaß man hätte hat, sie auseinanderzuziehen, um die Kammer für die nächste Charge frei zu machen. Man wirft die Leichen - naß von Schweiß und Urin, kotbeschnitzelt, Menstruationsblut an den Beinen, heraus. Kinderleichen fliegen durch die Luft. Man hat keine Zeit, die Reitpeitschen der Ukrainer sausen auf die Arbeitskommandos. Zwei Dutzend Zahnärzte öffnen mit Haken den Mund und schauen nach Gold - Gold links - ohne Gold rechts! - Andere Zahnärzte brechen mit Zangen und Hämer die Goldzähne und Kronen aus den Kiefern. - Unter allen springt der Hauptmann Wirth hervor. Er ist in seinem Element. Einige der Arbeiter kontrollieren Genitalien nach Gold, Brillen und Wertsachen. - Wirth ruft mich heraus. Heben Sie mal diese Konservendbüchse mit Goldzähnen, das ist nur von gestern und vorgestern! In einer unglaublichen und falschen Sprechweise sagt er zu mir: Sie glauben garnicht, was wir jeden Tag finden an Gold und Brillanten - er sprach es mit 2 L ohne J-Laut und Dollar. - Aber schauen Sie selbst! - Und nun führte er mich zu einem Juwelier, der alle diese Schätze zu verwalten hatte und ließ mich alles sehen. Man zeigte mir dann auch noch einen früheren Chef des Kaufhauses des Festens in Berlin V und ließ mir zu Ehren von einem kleinen Geiger aufspielen: Das ist ein ehemaliger Hauptmann der Kaiserlich-Königlich Österreichischen Armee mit dem EK I, die beiden Chefs des jüdischen Arbeitskommandos. - Die nackten Leichen wurden auf Holzwagen nur wenige Meter weit in Gruben von 100 x 12 x 2 20 m geworfen. Nach einigen Tagen garten die Leichen hoch und fielen alsdann kurze Zeit später stark zusammen, sodaß man eine neue Schicht auf dieselben draufwerfen konnte, dann wurden ca x 10 cm Sand darüber gestreut, sodaß nur noch vereinzelt Köpfe und Arme herausragten. - Am dem Tage meines Besuchs trafen in Belzec nur 2 Transporte mit zusammen ungefähr 12 500 Personen ein.

Diese..

Diese Anlage war seit April 1942 im Gange und schaffte im Durchschnitt pro Tag rund 1000 Tötungen. Wenn mein Freundeskreis und ich den Kondener Sender oder die Stimme Amerikas hörten, wanderten wir uns oft über die ahnungslosen Engel, die mit hunderttausenden von Toten aufwarteten, wo es schon zig Millionen waren. Die holländische Widerstandsbewegung ließ mir im Jahre 1943 durch Diplomingenieur Ubbink aus Dörsburg bestellen, ich möchte ihr nicht mit Grauseln aufwarten, sondern sie mit der strengsten Ehrhaftigkeit bedienen. Trotz meiner Weitergabe dieser Dinge im August 1942 an die Schwedische Gesandtschaft in Berlin glaubte man anscheinend einfach diese Zahlen nicht. Und doch sind sie leider - ich verbürge mich dafür mit meinem Eide w a h r ! Ich schätze die Zahl der auf Veranlassung von Adolf Hitler und Heinrich Himmler gemordeten wehr- und waffenlosen Menschen, die ohne jede Möglichkeit des Widerstandes in diese Mordfallen gelockt und dort umgebracht worden sind, auf mindestens 20 000 000 Menschen. Denn es handelt sich beileibe nicht nur um die vielleicht 5 oder 6 Millionen Juden Europas, die so umgebracht worden sind, sondern vor allem noch um die polnische und einen großen Teil der tschechischen Intelligenz, sowie um die führenden Schichten anderer Völkstümer, z.B. der Serben, insbesondere aber um die Polen und Tschechen. Hr. III. Dies waren sogenannte biologisch Wertlose, die da sie nicht mehr richtig arbeiten konnten, nach Ansicht der Nazis keine Existenzberechtigung besaßen. Kommissionen von angeblichen Ärzten fuhren mit feinen Limousinen und allerlei ärztlichen Hockspokasgerät von Dorf zu Dorf, von Stadt zu Stadt und untersuchten, in weiße Mäntel gekleidet und mit Hörrohren die gesamte Bevölkerung. Wer dem Augenschein nach anhaltend nicht mehr arbeitsfähig war, kam als unnützer Fresser auf die Liste und wurde nach einiger Zeit abgeholt und vergast. Hierüber entschieden Leute, die oft noch nicht mal Volksschulbildung besaßen und sich mit Herr Kollege und Herr Obermedizinalrat titulierten. — Ja ! ohne diese Maßnahmen, sagte mir ein SS - Sturmabführer in Lublin, wäre ganz Polen für uns wertlos, weil es sowieso stark bevölkert und krank ist. Wir holen nur nach, was die Natur sonst überall von sich aus besorgt und leider gerade beim Menschen vergessen hat ! — In Treblinka sah ich an anderen Tagen eine größere Anzahl Arbeiter, die in den Gräbern auf Leichen herumtanzten. " Man hat vergessen, die Leute anzukleiden, die bereits tot angekommen sind. Das muß natürlich nachgeholt werden wegen der Spinnstoffe und wegen der Fertsachen " sagte mir der Hauptmann Wirth. — Wirth hat mich in Berlin keinerlei Änderung der bisher üblichen Gaskammern und Tötungsmethoden vorzuschlagen, da sich ja alles bestens bewährt und eingespielt habe. Ich bin merkwürdigerweise in Berlin nie nach dergleichen gefragt worden. Die mitgebrachte Plausenre habe ich vergraben lassen.

Am nächsten Tage, dem 19. August 1942, fuhren wir mit dem Auto des Hauptmann Wirth nach Treblinka 120 km ENO von Warschau. Die Einrichtung war etwa dieselbe wie wesentlich größer als in Belzec. Acht Gaskammern und wahre Gebirge von Tefeln und Textilien und Wäsche. Zu unseren Ehren wurde im Gemeinschaftssaal in typisch himmlerischem mitdeutschen Stil ein Bankett gegeben. Das Essen war einfach, aber es stand alles in jeder Menge zur Verfügung. Himmler hatte selbst angeordnet, daß die Männer dieser Kommandos soviel Fleisch, Butter und sonstiges, insbesondere Alkohol erhalten sollten, wie sie wollten. Prof. Dr. med. Pfannenstiel hielt eine Rede, in der er den Männern die Nützlichkeit ihrer Aufgabe und die Wichtigkeit ihrer großen Mission klar machte. Zu mir allein sprach er von " sehr humanen Methoden " und von Schönheit der Arbeit ". Es klingt völlig ungläubig, aber ich verbürge mich dafür, daß er nicht etwa im Scherz, sondern im vollen Ernst! als Arzt diese Dinge so bezeichnet hat ! — Den Mannschaften sagte er insbesondere noch : Wenn man diese Judenkörper sieht,

dann...

dann wird einem erst recht klar, wie dankenswert eure Aufgabe ist. Beim Abschied wurden uns noch mehrere Kilogramm Butter und viele Flaschen Likör zum Mitnehmen angeboten. Ich hatte Mühe, diese Dinge mit Rücksicht darauf zurückzuweisen, daß ich von unseren angeblichen - ' G u t - alles dies genug hätte. Voran Pfannenstiel begleitete auch noch meine Portionen einstrich.- Wir fuhren dann mit dem Auto nach Warschau. Dort traf ich, als ich vermeintlich auf ein Schlafwagenbett wartete, im Zuge des Legationssekretär der Schwedischen Gesandtschaft in Berlin, Baron von Otter. Noch unter dem frischen Eindruck meiner entsetzlichen Erlebnisse habe ich diesem alles dies erzählt mit der Bitte, dies seiner Regierung und den Alliierten sofort mitzuteilen, da jeder Tag Verzögerung weiteren Tausenden und Zehntausenden das Leben kosten müsse. Von Otter bat mich um eine Referenz, als welche ich ihn Herrn Generalsuperintendenten Dr. Otto Dibelius, Berlin, Brüderweg 2 angebe, ein führendes Mitglied der evangelischen Widerstandsbewegung, zugleich einen vertrauten Freund meines Freundes, des Pfarrers Martin Niemöller. Ich traf dann Herrn von Otter noch 2 mal in der Schwedischen Gesandtschaft. Er hatte inzwischen persönlich in Stockholm Bericht erstattet und teilte mir mit, daß dieser Bericht erheblichen Einfluß auf die Schwedisch - Deutschen Beziehungen gehabt habe. Ich versuchte in gleicher Sache dem päpstlichen Nuntius in Berlin Bericht zu erstatten. Dort wurde ich gefragt, ob ich Soldat sei. Daraufhin wurde jede weitere Unterhaltung mit mir abgelehnt. Ich wurde zum sofortigen Verlassen der Botschaft Seiner Heiligkeit aufgefordert. Ich sage dies hier deswegen, weil daraus erhellt, wie schwer es einem Deutschen gemacht wurde, sich in seiner Not irgendwo Rat zu schaffen, wenn er so gar bei dem Vertreter Seiner Heiligkeit als dem Stellvertreter Christus auf Erden nicht einmal in so entsetzlicher Not Rat und Hilfe finden konnte! - Beim Verlassen der päpstlichen Botschaft wurde ich von einem Polizisten mit dem Rade verfolgt. Ich hatte meinen Revolver entschert in der Tasche um mich gerade zu beschützen, als dieser Polizist völlig unbegreiflicherweise zwar dicht an mich herankam, aber dann kehrt machte. Ich habe dann alles dies unter täglichem Risiko meines Kopfes unter dem Risiko, gequält und gehängt zu werden, hunderterten von einflussreichen Persönlichkeiten berichtet, unter anderem dem Syndikus des katholischen Bischofs von Berlin, Dr. Winter, zur Weitergabe an den Ew. Herrn Bischof und an den Päpstlichen Stuhl. Ich muß noch hinzufügen, daß Günther vom Reichssicherheitshauptamt - ich glaube es ist der Sohn des Rassen - Günthers - Anfang 1944 nochmals sehr große Mengen Klausuren von mir für einen sehr dunklen Zweck verlangte. Das Gift sollte in seine Dienststelle in der Kurfürstenstraße geliefert werden und dort in einem Schuppen, den er mir zeigte, verwahrt werden. Es handelte sich um sehr große Mengen, insgesamt um mehrere Tonnagen, die nach und nach aufgebraucht und zu seiner Verfügung gehalten werden sollten. Das Gift genügte zum Umbringen von vielen Millionen Menschen. Günther sagte, er wisse noch nicht und könne noch nicht übersehen, ob, wann, wozu welchen Zweck, für welchen Personkreis das Gift gebraucht oder auch nicht gebraucht werde. Jedenfalls müsse es dort ständig verfügbar sein.- Aus manchen Fragen zum Technischen, die Günther stellte, entnahm ich, daß wohl beabsichtigt gewesen sein muß, in einer Art Lüge - oder Einbräuen eine sehr große Zahl von Menschen umzubringen. Ich erklärte Günther nach einer eingehenden Ortsbesichtigung, daß ich die Verantwortung der Lagerung des Giftes in dem genannten Schuppen mitten in der Reichshauptstadt keineswegs übernehmen vermöchte, da das Gift ansteckend, am mindestens 2 mal die gesamte Bevölkerung von Berlin damit umzubringen und eine Zersetzungs- und Vergasungserscheinung wahrscheinlich sei. Mit Mühe gelang es mir dann, ihn zu überreden, das Gift in den Konzentrationslagern Oranienburg und Auschwitz zu verwahren. Ich richtete es dann so ein, daß ich das Gift dort sofort

nach ...

nach Eintreffen jeweils für Zwecke der Desinfektion, die dort laufend Waggons
Blausäure brauchte, verschwinden ließ. Die Rechnungen der Lieferfirma - Deut-
sche Gesellschaft für Schädlingsbekämpfung, Frankfurt a.M. und Friedberg - ließ
- ich auf meinen Namen ausstellen, angeblich wegen der Geheimhaltung, in Wahr-
heit, um in meinen Dispositionen ungestörter zu sein und um das Gift besser
verschwinden lassen zu können. Aus dem gleichen Grunde habe ich es stets ver-
mieden, die vielen auflaufenden Rechnungen je zur Bezahlung vorzulegen, da ich da-
durch dem SD dauernd an diesen Vorrat hätte erinnern müssen und über den ord-
nungsmäßigen Befund von den bezahlenden Stellen sicher Recherchen angestellt
worden wären. So zog ich es vor, die Firma auf Mahnungen hin zu verärgern und
Rechnungen unbezahlt zu lassen. Der Direktor der Degesch erzählte mir übrigens
gesprächsweise, daß er für Tötung von Menschen Blausäure in Ampullen geliefert
habe. - Welchen Personenkreis Günther auf Anweisung seines Vorgesetzten Himmler
gegebenenfalls umbringen sollte, habe ich nie erfahren. Ich dachte der Zahl
nach an die Insassen der Konzentrationslager und die ausländischen Arbeiter, ab-
auch an die Offiziere, die Deutsche Pfarrerschaft und an die Kriegsgefangenen.
Namentlich als Goebbels später davon sprach gegebenenfalls würde der National-
sozialismus die Tür gewaltig hinter sich zuschlagen, habe ich nochmals sorg-
fältig geprüft, ob diese Mordreserve wirklich vernichtet war. Der Befehl Him-
mlers zur Umbringung aller Insassen von KL im Ernstfalle war schon damals ohne
weiteres vorauszusehen. - Ein anderes mal fragte mich Günther, ob es möglich
sei, in Maria - Theresienstadt in den dortigen Festungsgräben, in denen die
dort internierten Juden spazieren gehen durften, diese durch von oben hinein-
geworfene Blausäuredosen zu vergiften. Um diesen schrecklichen Plan zu veran-
stalten, erklärte ich dies für unmöglich. Ich habe dann später erfahren, daß sich
der SD auf andere Weise doch Blausäure verschafft und die Juden - die es in
Theresienstadt angeblich so besonders gut haben sollten, - doch umgebracht hat.
Es waren dies Väter von gefallenen Söhnen, Inhaber hoher Orden und verdienst-
volle Juden. - Die schrecklichsten Konzentrationslager waren übrigens keineswegs
Belsen oder Buchenwald. Weit schlimmer waren Mauthausen - Garzen bei Linz an der
Donau und Auschwitz. Dort sind Millionen von Menschen in Gaskammern und Gas-
autos (fahrbaren Kammern) verschwunden. In Auschwitz wurden allein Millionen
Kinder durch Unterhalten eines Blausäuretopfs unter die Nase getötet. In Fran-
konzentrationslager Ravensbrück bei Fürstenberg in Mecklenburg habe ich Versuche
an lebenden Frauen gesehen, die in Auftrage des SS- Gruppenführers Professor Dr.
Gebhardt - Hohenlynden der Hauptsturmführers Dr. med. Grundlach durchführte.
Ich habe ferner in meiner Dienststelle viele derartige Berichte zu sehen bekom-
men. Diese betrafen z.B. Versuche mit Fervitin bis zu 100 Tabletten pro Tag an
100 bis 200 Häftlingen bis zum eventuellen Todeserfolg. Andere derartige Ver-
suche wurden mit Serum und Lymphe - z.B. mit den verschiedensten fleckfieberer-
regenden Stoffen - durchgeführt. Himmler hat sich die Genehmigung derartiger Versuche
an durch den SD zum Tode Verurteilten persönlich vorbehalten. Ich habe zu fer-
ner in Cranienburg an einem Tage mehrere hunderte oder gar tausende Homosexuel-
ler spurlos in den Öfen verschwinden sehen. In Mauthausen war es üblich, Juden
in Steinbruch arbeiten zu lassen und sie alsdann - wie zufällig - eine hohe
Steinwand herunterzustürzen. Sie blieben unter tot liegen und wurden als Un-
fälle registriert. Der SS - Hauptsturmführer Dr. Frantz - ein wilder Antisemi-
t aus Bonn am Rhein, beim Reichsanwalt SS und Polizei Abteilungsleiter hat mir
und vielen anderen Personen häufig mit Unterstützung von seinen zahlreichen der-
artigen Erlebnissen erzählt.

Ich hatte in Belzec den Eindruck, daß an Besichtigungstagen nach so langen Fahrt
in den Kammern wirklich alle Menschen tot waren. Aber der Hauptmann Wirth, ein
völlig ungebildeter Mensch ohne auch nur die geringsten Kenntnisse von Chemie
und Physiologie, hat mir die sonderbarsten Dinge erzählt.

(Offensichtlich...)

Jude habe sich in Schreien gelöst. Darauf habe man ihn die Gelenke gebrochen - als er auch dann noch schwieg, haben ihn mit dem Hintern auf eine glühende Eisenplatte gesetzt. Sie hätten mal sehen sollen, wie der Mann gesprächig wurde.

Gelgentlich eines Besuchs beim Büro der Waffen SS in Dublin, teilten uns die beiden Architekten mit, daß sie am Vormittag die Leichenhalle in einen Kriegsgefangenenlager gemessen hätten, um sie zu vergrößern. Tausende von Leichen - viele Fleckfieberkranke - hätten dort aufgestapelt gelegen. Plötzlich hätten sie gesehen, wie sich einige noch bewegten. Der Totenführer, der den Schlüssel hatte, habe nur gefragt: "Wo" dann habe er ein bereitliegendes Stück Rundholz genommen und den Leuten den Schädel eingeschlagen. - Nicht das was dies geschah, sondern die Zuseher, habe sie gewundert, sondern die Selbstverständlichkeit, mit der dies geschah! - Bei Gelegenheit meines Besuchs hatte eine Jüdin mit einem verborgen gehaltenen Rasiermesser einigen Arbeit - Juden Schritte in den Hals gebracht. Wirth bedauerte lebhaft, daß die Frau schon tot war, sie hätte müssen exemplarisch bestraft werden! Die verwundeten Juden ließ er sorgfältig künstlich betören, damit sie glauben sollten, sie würden wirklich am Leben bleiben, angesiedelt und belohnt werden! Und das glauben die Leute, das glauben die Leute, diese Idioten, rief Wirth laut vor sich hin! - In Belzec war besonders grauhaft der Wettbewerb, den man unter den Männern und Jungen der Transporte veranstaltete, die Kleider zu den Täggen zu schleppen. Wer am besten schafft kommt zum Arbeitskommando! - Es entstand ein Wettrennen verneintlich auf Leben und Tod unter diesen nackten Menschen, die unter dem Gelächter der SS die Kleider weg-schleppten. Natürlich verschwanden alle nachher in den Kammern. Nur einige junge alte und kranke Leute, die nicht einmal mehr von den anderen gestützt zu den Kammern wanken konnten, wurden abseits gelegt und alsdann erschossen. - Einige ergreifende Bilder stehen mir noch vor Augen: Das verträumte 3 jährige Judenbubche das die Bindfäden zum Zusammenbinden der Schuhe austeilen mußte - selbst ein so ches Kind wurde unwillkürlich eingespart in Hitlers entsetzliche Todesmaschine und Henkelmörderi, in Himmlers und Wirths Leichenfledderei. - Oder ich denke an ein kleines Mädchen, das einen Motor vor der Kammer ein kleines Zerkleinertchen vorlegte, das dann ein Judenbubchen von 3 Jahren fand: wie es das Zerkleinertchen hob es liebevoll betrachtete, seine Freude daran hatte - und dann in nächsten Augenblick - ja, diesmal muß ich sagen: sanft in die Kammer hineingeschoben wurde. Der SS - Hauptsturmführer Obermeyer aus Pirmasens erzählte mir: in einem Dorf in der Nähe habe ich einen Juden mit seiner Frau aus seiner Heimatstadt Pirmasens getroffen. Der war im Weltkrieg Nachtmeister, ein anständiger Kerl. Wir haben ihn zusammen gespielt, er hat mir sogar einmal das Leben gerettet, wo ich nahe tot gefahren worden wäre. Den Mann selbst Frau werde ich jetzt mitnehmen in mein Arbeitskommando." Ich fragte Obermeyer, was aus dem Mann später wurde. Er sah mich erstarrt an: "Was soll aus ihm werden, genau dasselbe wie mit allen anderen, da gibts garnichts anderes. Es vielleicht werde ich sie totschießen lassen.

Andererseits habe ich in der SS eine Anzahl von Leuten angetroffen, die diese Kettschärfe verurteilten und z.T. darüber zu glühenden Hassern des Nazismus geworden waren. Ich denke da vor allem an den Stabsführer des Obersten Hygienikers beim Reichsarzt SS und Polizei, Hauptsturmführer Heinrich Holländer. Dieser gab mir Kenntnis von allen irgendwie wichtigen Vorgängen und ließ alles verschwinden, was mich in meiner Dienststelle irgendwie belasten oder verdächtig machen konnte. Ich wäre selbst längst im Ofen gelandet, wenn dieser treue christkatholische Freund und glühende Antinazi nicht treulich die Hand über mich gehalten hätte. Scharfer Antinazi war auch der Leiter der inneren Abteilung des SS-Lazarettes Berlin, SS Sturmbannführer Dr. med. Techt, der seit 1941 viele mutige Worte sch

fer

der Verurteilung der Nazi- und SS - Methoden fand und damit ständig seinen Kopf rinkelte.- Das Gleiche gilt für die Chirurgen SS-Hauptsturmführer Dr.med. Hlssen und Itzhoo und Dr. med. Sorge aus Jena. Ein wirksamer Antinazi - Propagandist war auch der SS-Hauptsturmführer Dr. geol.Fritz Krantz aus Bonn, der die zahlreichen Schaulichkeiten, die er in den Konzentrationslagern zu sehen bekam, unter ständigem Risiko, gehängt zu werden, im Volk herum bekannt machte.

Zu der Gruppe der Offiziere von 20. Juli 1944 zu rechnen sind die leitenden Apotheker der Waffen SS, SS-Gruppenführer Dr. pharm. Blumenreuther und seine beiden Mitarbeiter SS-Stabsarzt Dr. Behnenburg und Dr. Radolphi. Letzterer trat im Oktober 1944 das Führerbild seines Dienstzimmers mit Füssen.

Von der belgischen, holländischen und luxemburgischen SS waren 2/3 der Mannschaften durch unglaubliche Lügen- und Betrugsmethoden über angebliche Sportkurse und dergleichen mit Gewalt hereingepreßt worden. Ebe die Leute sich versahen - noch bevor sie eingekleidet waren - waren sie durch bloße Anwesenheit bei einer Verordnungsakt mit verurteilt und wurden in Folge der Weigerung als fahnenflüchtig behandelt oder wegen Gehorsamsverweigerung gehängt oder bestenfalls erschossen. Wir streng derartige Dinge gehandhabt wurden, erhielt z.B. aus der Tatsache, daß zahlreiche ganz junge jugendliche Angehörige der Waffen SS lediglich deswegen erschossen worden sind, weil sie einen Kameraden von aussen in der Stallgegend an die Hose gefaßt haben. Dieser Befehl zur Abtötung auch nur des geringsten Anzeichens einer perversen Neigung wurde allen Angehörigen der SS vorlesen und war von Himmler selbst unterzeichnet.- Tausende von Hitlerjungen sind auf dieselbe Weise, wie oben erwähnten Ausländer gegen ihren Willen in die SS gepreßt worden. Das Gleiche gilt für die auf Hitlers und Himmlers Befehl in die SS gepreßten Angehörigen anderer Wehrmachtsteile, insbesondere der Luftwaffe und der Marine. Es wäre ganz falsch und ungerecht - höchst ungerecht, ohne Prüfung dieser Verhältnisse jeden SS-Angehörigen für die furchtbaren Verbrechen der SS mitverantwortlich zu machen zu wollen. Es muß hier auch noch erwähnt werden, daß vielfach die Polizei viel übler war als die SS. Sie hat z.B. bei der Erfassung der Juden, bei ihrer Zusammenstellung zu den Transporten und bei der Ablieferung bei Himmlers Schlachthäusern die übelsten Handlangerdienste geleistet, obwohl es dem alten und erfahrenen Beamten sicher ein Leichtes gewesen wäre, mindestens einen großen Teil der Juden karteimäßig verschwinden zu lassen. Ausserdem ist es billig, an diese alten gereiften Beamten, die wissen mußten, was Recht und Unrecht ist, andere Anforderungen zu stellen, als an unreife Hitlerjungen und junge SS-Leute. Die Tatsache, daß Himmler nicht nur Reichsführer der SS, sondern gleichzeitig Chef der Deutschen Polizei war, wird vielfach lange nicht genug berücksichtigt. Die Blutschuld der Polizei an der reibungslosen Durchführung der Judenschlachtung ist ungeheuer, auch wenn sie größtenteils von sicheren Schreibtisch aus oder aus der Geborgenheit der Büros erfolgte. In dieser Beziehung ist weitgehend zwischen Gestapo und Polizei kein Unterschied zu machen. Das schließt nicht aus, daß manche Gestapo- und Polizeibeamte sich ernsthaft bemüht haben mag, dem Recht zu dienen und seine Pflicht nach seinem Gewissen, nicht nach den Nazi-Befehlen auszurichten. Das aber wäre seine Sache, dies zu beweisen. Grundsätzlich müßte jeder Polizeibeamte zunächst genau so angesehen werden, wie jeder SS-Mann.- In meiner Wohnung in Berlin W 35, Lützowstrasse 47 I links hatte ich einen größeren Kreis bewährter leidenschaftlicher und aktiver Antinazis um mich versammelt. Ich nenne hier einige Namen :

Major ..

Major Lutz Reibh s.Zt. Hamburg - Glasurit - Werke.

Direktor Alexander Menne, bis 1939 in der englischen Farbindustrie, tätig, 1944 - 1945 8 Monate in SD.-Haft, jetzt Hamburg Glasurit - Werke.

Dr. jur. Landgerichtsrat a.D. Felix Bass, Justizbeamter der Generaldirektion Telefunken, Berlin SW 11. Zwar Mitglied der NSDAP, aber seit 1934 scharfer aktiver Antinazi, der sich mit viel Geschick und Erfolg bemühte, die Partei von innen her zu corsetzen. Einer der leidenschaftlichsten Hassor des Nazismus.

Pfarrer Buchholz, Strafanstaltspfarrer der Anstalt Ploetzensee. Buchholz hat tausende von Leuten, die vom Volksgerichtshof zum Tode verurteilt waren zum Schaffot oder zum Galgen begleitet unter anderen die Offiziere des 20. Juli 1944. Unter eigener Gefahr hat Buchholz die Gefangenen mit Nahrungsmitteln, Medikamenten, Betäubungsmitteln und Rauchwaren usw. versorgt.

Fräulein Dorothea Schultend Frau Arndt, Sekretärinnen und Hilfen von Pastor Niemöller aus Dahlen und Dachen.

Dr. Hermann Ehlers und Dr. Ebbo Elze, Justiziere der Bekennniskirche und der Widerstandsbewegung Niemöller.

Pfarrer Kochalsky, Vertreter im Amt von Pfarrer Martin Niemöller.

Außerdem stand in mit folgenden Personen aus der antinationalsozialistischen Bewegung in enger Fühlung.

Generalsuperintendent Dr. Otto Dibelius, Berlin-Lichterfeld, Erüderweg 2 & Familie Pfarrer Niemöller, s.Zt. Leonie a.Starnberger See, Villa Kayser,

Präses D.Zoch, Führer der westfälischen Bekennniskirche, Bad- Oynhausen Professor Freiherr von Huene, Universität Tübingen.

Pfarrer Rohling, Hagen Lutherkirche, führendes Mitglied der Westf. Bekennniskirche.

Pfarrer Valpertag Eagen, kath, Marienkirche.

Pfarrer Otto Fehr, Saarbrücken, Chef der südwestdeutschen kirchlichen Widerstandsbewegung.

Fabrikant Bernhard J.Goedecker, Siemensstrasse 17, München.

Direktor Franz Bäckerle, i.Fa.Goedecker, ebendort,

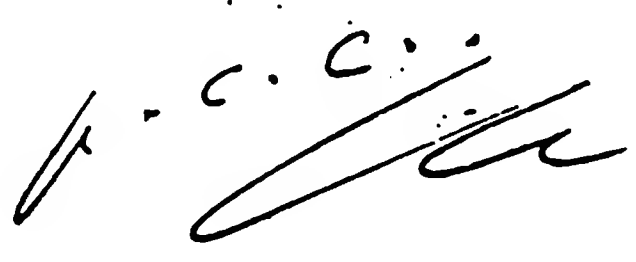
Architekt u. Schriftsteller Otto Völckers, München, Stievestr. 9,

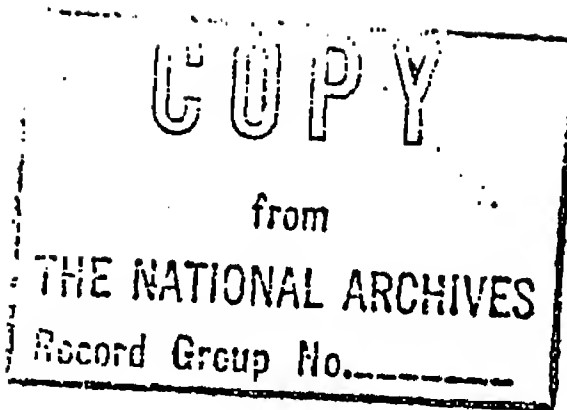
Dr.med.Harbert Straub, Arzt, Mötzingen, nebst Familie,

Papiergroßhändler Heinz Hebenhan, Berlin - Dahlen, s.Zt. Kirchentellinsfurt bei Tübingen nebst Familie,

Alle meine Angaben entsprechen in vollem Anmaß der Wahrheit. Ich bin mir der außerordentlichen Tragweite dieser meiner Aufzeichnungen vor Gott und der gesamten Menschheit voll bewußt und nehme es auf meinen Eid, daß nichts von allem, was ich hier aufgezeichnet habe, erdichtet oder erfunden ist, sondern alles sich genau so verhält.

gez: Kurt Gerstein.





RG 238, Records of the National Archives
Collection of World War II War Crimes

2170-PS

J. C. C.

Appendix II

Kurt Gerstein

HIS LIFE, HIS DEATH, HIS “CONFESSIONS”

11 August 1905 Birth at Münster/Westphalia. Father: President of the Regional Tribunal (died 1954); Mother: née Schmemmann (died 1931).

1911-1919 Father working at Saarbrücken. Kurt attends primary then secondary school.

1919-1921 Expelled by the French, the father is transferred to Halberstadt in the region of Magdeburg. Kurt continues his studies at the *Gymnasium* (high school) there.

1921-1925 Continuation and end of his secondary studies at Neuruppin, region of Berlin. Easter 1925, obtains his school leaving certificate.

1925 Joins the Evangelical Youth Movement and the college bible circle.

1925-1931 Probationer/trainee in the mines and student at Marburg, then at Berlin and Aachen (Aix-la-Chapelle), superior technical schools.

June 1931 Passes the examination for Certificated Engineer (specifications: mining and chemistry) at Berlin.

1931-1935 Courses of practical instruction in the mines.

2 May 1933 Joins the Nazi party (NSDAP).

October 1933 Recruited into the S.A. (*Sturmabteilungen* — “Storm Troopers”).

30 January 1935 At the theater in Hagen, *Wittekind*, a play in the pagan spirit, is performed for the second anniversary of Hitler’s rise to power. Gerstein demonstrates his disapproval; he is manhandled by the Nazis present.

November 1935 Passes the examination of Bergassessor (Mines Assistant). Engaged to be married to Elfriede Bensch, daughter of a pastor.

From May 1936 to 27 September 1936 Employed at the mines in the Saar, he prepares the "Day of the Miner," which was to be held 30 November 1936. He sends out the invitation forms accompanied by inserts in which there is some talk of train compartments reserved for mad dogs (!) and contagious people (!). The police are alerted and search his home where they find seditious pamphlets of a religious coloration, ready to be mailed to prominent persons throughout Germany. He is arrested on 24 September 1936 and imprisoned at Saarbrücken. He is freed during the latter half of October 1936.

15 October 1936 Expelled from the NSDAP for anti-state activities.

December 1936 Begins his medical studies at Tübingen.

9 February 1937 Loses his job as mines official.

May 1937 Forbidden to speak in public in the territory of the Reich.

31 August 1937 and 2 November 1937 Civil marriage, then religious marriage to Elfriede Bensch.

From 14 July to 28 August 1938 Second arrest. Interned at the camp at Welzheim.

September 1938 Opening of an official inquiry for high treason (involved in an alleged monarchist plot).

October 1938 Proceedings cancelled.

From July 1939 to June 1940 Working with the Société Wintershall at Merkers/Rhön.

25 October 1939 Birth of his son Arnulf.

From October 1940 Working with the firm of Limon Fluhme & Co at Düsseldorf, in which his mother's family have an interest.

From March 1941 to May 1941 Joins the SS as a volunteer; military instruction at Hamburg, Arnhem and Orianenburg.

June 1941 Assignment to Institute of Hygiene of the Waffen SS.

September 1941 Birth of his daughter Adelheid.

1 November 1941 Promoted to Untersturmführer F (second lieutenant specialist.)

January 1942 Appointed head of department "Public Health – Technical."

8 June 1942 Receives the order to supply prussic acid-based fumigant (Zyklon B) to Belzec concentration camp in Poland.

17, 18, 19, 20 August 1942 Meets the SS General Globocnik at Lublin. Visits the camps at Belzec and Treblinka.

- 20 August 1942** In the train Warsaw-Berlin, meets Baron von Otter, a Swedish diplomat stationed at Berlin.
- December 1942** Birth of a second son, Olaf.
- 20 April 1943** Promoted Obersturmführer F (lieutenant specialist)
We have very little exact information on Gerstein's activities in the SS between September 1942 and March 1945.
- End of March 1945** Abandons his post in Berlin and rejoins his family at Tübingen.
- April 1945** A hastily-scrawled paper preserved at LKA reads: *Thursday 18 left (gefahren) / Friday 19 Ulm / Saturday 20 11 am. (and in the margin Metzingen) / Sunday 21 To Metzingen / Monday 22 from Metzingen to Rottweil (and in the margin the word "prison" written in French).*
- Fleeing from the German troops,
 he surrenders to the First French Army.*
- From 26 April to 6 May 1945** Held at the Hotel Mohren at Rottweil, he benefits from the status of a privileged prisoner: while there, he writes his "confessions."
- 5 May 1945** Meets at the Hotel Mohren two Allied investigators to whom he gives his "confession" typewritten in French of 26 April 1945 (T II), together with some invoices of the firm DEGESCH and a brief note in English.
- 26 May 1945** Taken to Langenargen, near Constance, then to Paris by the French officers of the O.R.C.G. (War Crimes Investigation Office).
- Until 5 July 1945** Held at the quarters of the O.R.C.G. at 48 rue de Villejust at Paris, 16.
- 26 June 1945** Interrogated by Commandant Beckhardt in the offices of the O.R.C.G.
- 5 July 1945** Imprisoned at the military prison of Cherche-Midi in Paris and charged with murder and complicity.
- 13 July and 19 July 1945** Interrogated by Commandant Mathieu Mattéi, examining magistrate of the 2nd Military Tribunal of Paris.
- 20 July 1945** Confined to a separate cell.
- 25 July 1945** Found hanged in his cell.
- 31 July 1945** Autopsy at the Medico-Legal Institute by Professor Piedlièvre; verdict, suicide.
- 3 August 1945** Buried in the cemetery at Thiais.
- 7 August 1945** Baron Lagerfelt, diplomat based in London, following a recent letter from his friend Baron von Otter, calls the attention of the British Foreign Office to Gerstein.

- 9 October 1945** Professor Ch. Sannié, Director of the Judicial Identity Service of the Prefecture of Police, certifies: — on the one hand, that he has had photographed, four copies each, thirteen documents left by Gerstein on his death; — on the other hand, that a fourteenth document sent by the Examining Magistrate did not arrive.
- 10 October 1945** Commandant Mattéi places in two officially-sealed envelopes: — in one, the original documents; — in other, the four photographic copies of each.
- 10 November 1945** The Direction of Military Justice forwards the complete Gerstein file to Professor Charles Gros, French delegate at the War Crimes Commission in London; probably forwarded afterwards to Warsaw to be used by the Poles, the file disappeared for almost twenty-six years.
- January 1946** The “confession,” typewritten in French, of 26 April 1945 (T II) is rediscovered in the American archives of the main trial at Nürnberg under the reference PS-1553. The Americans pass over this document, which should have been the most sensational document of the trial, in silence. On the insistence of the French, use is made only of the Zyklon B invoices which were attached to the “confession.”
- June 1948** Gerstein’s widow is informed, for the first time, of her husband’s death. No information of any sort was ever given to her either on the circumstances of his death or the place of his burial.
- 1950** The denazification Court of Tübingen refuses to rehabilitate the Nazi Gerstein.
- 1951** Léon Poliakov publishes *Le Bréviaire de la Haine* with a preface by François Mauriac. It includes an extract from PS-1553 (T II) tarnished by serious errors and distortions.
- April 1953** In Germany, Hans Rothfels published in the magazine *Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte* the text of the “confession” written in German, dated 4 May 1945 (T III.) He warns the reader that he has made cuts and that he has not copied eight half-pages of supplements (*Ergänzungen*) which, according to him, do not merit being classified as eyewitness evidence.
- 1955** Léon Poliakov reprints the text of the German magazine in his book *Das Dritte Reich und die Juden*. The translation in French under the title *Le III^eme Reich et les Juifs* will appear in 1959. This translation contains distortions of the original text which cannot be simple errors of translation.
- 1960** First republication of Leon Poliakov’s book *Le Bréviaire de la Haine*. The reproduction in part of PS-1553 (T II) is even less

faithful than in 1951. The republications of 1974 and 1979 will be identical to that of 1960.

1961 The Gerstein “confession” in the version PS-1553 (T II) is used at the Eichmann trial in Jerusalem.

1961 Paul Rassinier publishes *Ulysse trahi par les siens*. For the first time, he raises the question of Gerstein’s “confession” (PS-1553/T II), as it seems to him improbable.

1962 The German Protestant Rolf Hochhuth presents a play, *Le Vicaire*, in which he attributes an important role to Gerstein and uses it to attack the attitude which he imputes to the Pope Pius XII during the Second World War.

1962 Paul Rassinier publishes *Le véritable procès Eichmann ou les vainqueurs incorrigibles*. For the first time, he energetically takes issue with Léon Poliakov for the treatment to which he has subjected the texts of Gerstein’s “confessions.”

1964 Saul Friedländer in his book *Pie XII et le III^eme Reich* uses the evidence of Gerstein against the Vatican.

1964 Paul Rassinier, in his book *Le Drame des Juifs européens*, compares two very different reproductions of PS-1553 (T II) offered to his readers by Léon Poliakov.

1964 Helmut Franz publishes a book in Germany on Kurt Gerstein, who was his friend.

1965 Paul Rassinier, in his book *L’Operation “Vicaire,”* states once more that Gerstein’s account is incredible.

1965 The Minister-President of Baden-Württemberg and future German Chancellor, Kurt Kiesinger, has Gerstein rehabilitated.

1967 Saul Friedländer publishes *Kurt Gerstein ou l’ambiguïté du Bien*.

1969 Pierre Joffroy publishes *L’Espion de Dieu / La Passion de Kurt Gerstein*.

3 August 1971 The French Minister of Foreign Affairs returns the Gerstein file, finally rediscovered after having disappeared in November 1945, to the Direction of Military Justice. It is incomplete: the two officially-sealed envelopes containing the documents found after Gerstein’s death are inexplicably missing.

21 February 1979 The newspaper *Le Monde* publishes a declaration, signed by thirty-four historians, on the Hitler policy of extermination. The authors of the declaration, Léon Poliakov and Pierre Vidal-Naquet, include in it an extract of Gerstein’s evidence from the version PS-1553 (T II).

8 March 1979 Léon Poliakov and Pierre Vidal-Naquet reply to

readers in *Le Monde*; these readers had written to the paper after the publication of the declaration of 21 February to express their astonishment that, according to the Gerstein "report," seven to eight hundred persons were crammed into a gas chamber at Belzec with an area of twenty-five square meters. The two historians recall that they believe the Gerstein account as "indisputable as to the essentials"; in consequence one can, according to them, debate certain details [*sic*] of the "report." They consider moreover that the mistakes of the SS officer are easily explained, for the following two reasons: exactness in matters of figures was not his predominant characteristic (which causes some surprise in the case of an engineer); and his visit to Belzec in August 1942 had distressed him to such an extent that even by April-May 1945 he had never recovered his spirits.

September 1982 In the collection "Que sais-je?," François de Fontette publishes *Histoire de l'antisémitisme*. He reproduces forty-three and a half lines of Gerstein's account in the version dated 4 May 1945 (T III). In the middle of the reproduction, an amputation of thirty-five lines even omits the gassing operation.

1983 In Germany, a book of 350 pages appears, entitled *N.S. Massentötungen durch Giftgas*, of which pages 171 to 174 are devoted to the "Gerstein-Bericht" (Gerstein report). The author of these three pages is the Israeli Yitzhak Arad, the book was edited by Eugen Kogon, Hermann Langbein and Adalbert Rückerl. A partial reproduction of T III is presented, to the total of forty-seven lines, interrupted at four places by ellipsis points, which eliminate sixty-six lines and at the same time a large number of improbabilities. The description of the gassing is absent from the book; thus readers have no knowledge of it; they are confronted with what one could call a "pious cut."

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Postscript I

The Pfannenstiel Case:

A Reticent Witness but “Co-operative As to Essentials”

HENRI ROQUES

One of the many documents of the United Nations War Crimes Commission of the year 1945 contains a list of the principal criminals sought by the French delegation. The names of seven “war criminals” feature on the document, as follows:

- Hitler, Adolf
- Himmler, Heinrich
- Eickmann, [*sic*], senior official of the R.S.H.A.
- Günther, SS Sturmbannführer — employed by the R.S.H.A.
- Pfannenstiel — SS Obersturmbannführer — held the chair of hygiene [*sic*] at the University of Marburg
- Linden, Herbert, Dr. — Counsellor to the Ministry of the Interior
- Grawitz, Dr. — SS Gruppenführer, President of the German Red Cross.

Pfannenstiel, who features in fifth place on the list, owes this totally unexpected and completely unjustified honor to Kurt Gerstein, who actually mentions him in his “confessions” along with those of Günther, Linden and Grawitz. Similarly, Gerstein mentions Eichmann’s name (Gerstein spells the name Eickmann.)

Gerstein’s mention of the names in his “confessions” is the sole reason why the French investigators were interested in such otherwise obscure persons as Günther, Linden, and Pfannenstiel. The odd composition of this list of “war criminals” leaves one perplexed as to the seriousness of those who drew it up. What is the quite inoffensive Professor Pfannenstiel doing there, except that by chance he had the misfortune to accompany Gerstein when the latter journeyed to Lublin and who, according to the story of this same Gerstein, might have been present (also by chance) at a gassing of human beings?

Wilhelm Pfannenstiel was born in Breslau on February 12, 1890. Professor of Hygiene at the University of Marburg/Lahn from 1930 to 1945, he died at Marburg on November 1, 1982 after a life marked by many untoward accidents.

Pfannenstiel, a doctor and major in the Wehrmacht reserve, was from 1937 on the chief surgeon of the SS. At the end of 1939, he was appointed Hygiene Counsellor to the Waffen SS and confirmed in his rank of Sturmbannführer (Major.) He was subsequently promoted to Obersturmbannführer (Lt. Col.). In his capacity as inspector of sanitary installations; he traveled a great deal during the war; in Poland, in the Balkans, in Norway and in France.

Dr. Pfannenstiel traveled to Lublin, in Poland for the first time on August 17, 1942. Not having a car available for the journey from Berlin, he accepted a lift in Gerstein's vehicle; Gerstein, in his "confessions," claims he was ordered to deliver a quantity of hydrocyanic acid to the Belzec camp, not far from Lublin.

Pfannenstiel, commenting on Gerstein's mission, stated on November 9, 1959: "Gerstein was ordered by Globocnik to work on the disinfection of large quantities of clothing in storage at Belzec."

The duty assigned to Gerstein by Globocnik was not in the least surprising, since disinfection of the camps was among Gerstein's duties (he was attached to the Hygiene Institute of the Waffen SS). Did Gerstein actually carry out the order on disinfection? He says nothing further about it in his "confessions."

What was the purpose of Pfannenstiel's trip? According to his evidence before the German court, on November 9, 1959, his mission was to improve the supply of drinking water at Lublin and to improve the disposal of waste water.

In the matter of hygiene, Poland was a country very much behind the times; and the Germans feared the outbreak of epidemics all the more because they had set up near Lublin a vast concentration camp which was initially deficient in sanitary facilities.

On August 18, 1942, Dr. Pfannenstiel was still accompanied by Gerstein and, according to the latter, he was invited to attend the "ultra secret" gassing operations. But why was Pfannenstiel threatened with execution if he should reveal what he had seen when it would have sufficed, in order to preserve the secret of the operations, simply not to invite him at all?

Pfannenstiel was the only known surviving witness of the macabre history recounted by Gerstein. Thus, even though his role was only that of a spectator, his evidence is of capital importance.

The years passed, and the Belzec episode seemed to have been forgotten. In October 1944, Pfannenstiel was assigned to the Sixth Army as medical adviser in hygiene. In December, 1944 he partici-

pated in the Ardennes offensive; then he was sent to the Hungarian front. At the end of the war he was taken prisoner in Austria by the Americans. A surprise awaited him...

As we mentioned earlier, Pfannenstiel was featured in the fifth place on the French list of war criminals published by the UNWCC. Therefore, Allied investigators began to busy themselves with Pfannenstiel and interrogated him, founding their accusations on the "revelations" by Gerstein. At this time, Pfannenstiel was interned at Darmstadt. At first he denied everything: this story was absurd and he had never been present at the gassing of human beings. At his first interrogation in 1947, he acknowledged having gone to Lublin with Gerstein, which seemed to him quite harmless. In answer to the question: "Do you know the camp at Belzec?" he replied that he had heard of it. As far as the Treblinka camp was concerned, he knew nothing of it; he did not even recognize the name. "Were you present at an extermination?" "What extermination?" asked Pfannenstiel. And he replied with an energetic "No!"

But Pfannenstiel quickly recognized that by doing so he had adopted a very fragile line of defense. If he did not want to be delivered to the Poles, as so many others had been, and end his life on the gallows, he had to cooperate, in his own best interests, with the Allied investigators and their German aides.

In the report of the interrogation of October 30, 1947, one can find a strange comment by the judge charged with the inquiry. When Pfannenstiel acknowledged his journey to Lublin and then declared his ignorance as to the applications for hydrocyanic acid, the judge stated to him bluntly: "The beginning of your story is good, but afterwards it is bad. Do you wish to revise your story?" It is difficult to show more clearly that correct replies were not expected from Pfannenstiel but merely comments that would confirm Gerstein's allegations.

Here are Pfannenstiel's own words describing his misfortunes on the February 9, 1951 at Marburg before the State Prosecutor, a certain Straube:

Until the end of June 1947, I was kept prisoner in various camps, the last being the Garmisch camp. It was there that, as a political detainee by order of the Americans, I was sent to set up a medical service, but with the threat of automatic rearrest. I stayed there until September 1948. I was on the point of being released; from what I learned during an interview with the President of the denazification court, my case was going well. Then came a demand from the head of the Hesse office of health [Professor von Drygalski] to have my case transferred to the denazification court of Hesse, where further charges were outstanding against me. So then I was transferred to the camp at Darmstadt where I was kept in preventive detention, awaiting the proceedings of the denazification court...

At length, the judicial proceedings against Dr. Pfannenstiel were abandoned. The court acknowledged that Gerstein had “exaggerated” in his statements on the subject of Pfannenstiel. But Pfannenstiel had lost six years of his life because of the dubious Gerstein “evidence”!

On June 6, 1950, during a new interrogation, Pfannenstiel finally gave replies that were completely “satisfactory,” precisely the replies that had been awaited from him. To be sure, this was the reason why he was liberated five weeks later, on 12 July, after which date he was no longer considered to be a war criminal.

The fate of Pfannenstiel is comparable to that suffered by many of his compatriots in postwar Germany, the victims of a demented and tragic purge. If his case is exceptional, it is because Gerstein’s extravagant story had made him an “exceptional” witness of the gas extermination at the Belzec camp.

Rare are those Germans who endured without injury the anxieties and persecutions inflicted with an almost religious ardor by the “conquering judges” of 1945. Pfannenstiel was one of the victims. He had a wife and five children (still very young) to care for. He was no longer a young man, he was fifty-five years of age at the end of the war. What can a man do at that age except seek a compromise with the devil? For Pfannenstiel, it was evidently far better to try and start practising his profession again rather than to rot in prison for years on end. He was a man under threat; he had been a well-known member of the SS; and the fact of his having belonged only to the scientific branch of the “Black Order” did not guarantee him absolution: quite the contrary. We have to add that he was also accused of having been a participant more or less in Dr. Rascher’s experiments on the resistance to low temperatures made on the detainees at Dachau. He defended himself successfully but, whether true or false, the accusations could have had very serious consequences for him.

Thus, in regard to Gerstein and Belzec, he preferred to admit whatever was required of him: yes, he was present with Gerstein at the gassing of a convoy of Jews at the Belzec camp: “Several wagons,” he said, “were shunted into the camp, in which there were about 500 Jews, men, women, and children.” (Interrogation of November 9, 1959).

Gerstein, we should recall, had alleged that there were 45 wagons and they contained 6,700 persons.

Pfannenstiel stated that the Jews were taken to an establishment comprising six gas-chambers, of which only four were used, with an average of 125 persons per chamber. After completion of the gassing the corpses were thrown, according to Pfannenstiel’s words, into a large ditch where they were burned (which could not have been very

easy to effect!). Let us add that Gerstein's own story does not mention this incineration but says that the bodies were merely covered with a light layer of 10 centimeters of sand, which is equally improbable.

Pfannenstiel denied having made certain remarks at Belzec that were generously attributed to him by Gerstein and for which he was later accused by the denazifiers: he had not said that the Jews crowded into the gas-chambers "wept as though in the synagogue." Contrary to what was alleged by Gerstein, he affirmed that he never encouraged the SS, either at Belzec or at Treblinka, to pursue their "useful" work, nor did he evoke the "beauty" of the labour they had undertaken.

Pfannenstiel believed that Gerstein's account was full of errors and improbabilities. Thus, the figures of 25 million victims gassed, as alleged by the visionary, seemed to him obviously fantastic.

A hesitant and reticent witness, Pfannenstiel often gives the impression of not being very sure of himself. He recites the lesson taught him by the accusers badly. He contradicts himself, his memory fails...

Nevertheless, on the many occasions he was called as a witness at the trials of the camp guards, he tried not to implicate the accused. In July 1960, at the trial of a Belzec guard, Josef Oberhauser, he declared: "In all conscience, I have not seen the accused, either at Belzec or elsewhere. In any case, he is not the head of the supervisory guards...the latter differed considerably in his looks and his manner..."

Was he trying to save a companion in misfortune, or was he simply telling the truth? And how could he remember a face seen only once more than eighteen years before?

Pfannenstiel was considered to be a "providential" witness by the Allied tribunals and then by the German tribunals: he was a witness in the trial of the I.G. Farben executives on 30 October 1947, at Oberhauser's trial in Munich in 1960, at Hamburg in 1963, at Frankfurt-am-Main in 1966...In 1970 (at the age of eighty) he made a last deposition before the tribunal at Marburg.

Poor judges! If they constantly appealed to him and listened to him with so much patience, it was because his evidence, even though thin and proving little and of very doubtful spontaneity, confirmed once more "as to the essentials," the existence, albeit ephemeral, of the homicidal gas-chambers. Was the prosecution then, so short of witnesses on this aspect of the crime they so strongly denounced?

To believe Pfannenstiel, the gassings were limited to deplorable local and personal initiatives undertaken against a small number of detainees. If, in some camps, ingenious brutes undertook gassings, it

was because there did not exist any order from the authorities prohibiting such operations. In support of his statements, he recounts that after his visit to Belzec, he told Professor Dr. Grawitz (chief doctor of the SS) of what he had seen. Grawitz, outraged, stated that he would put an immediate stop to these gassings. Pfannenstiel declared that this was done as of November 1942, once and for all.

While far from being clear, this version of events cannot be rejected without examination: it defies the laws of probability less than the "confessions" written at Rottweil by a psychopath, religious fanatic and mystificator. Pfannenstiel's version is, furthermore, used increasingly to prove that Gerstein had written the truth "as to the essentials." Deceptively, one is led to believe that if the undoubted Nazi Pfannenstiel was obliged to admit the occurrence of homicidal gassings, even though limited, it is because they truly took place. It is admitted that Gerstein gave highly improbable figures, that was his character to exaggerate, that he was not an adept at arithmetic (applied to an engineer, this argument is somewhat suprising!), and that he was deeply upset by his visit to Belzec. As for Pfannenstiel, he did not want to admit the whole truth of the homicidal gassings, the existence of which he confirms, but which were much more extensive than he wants to be known. Truly, in spite of himself, Pfannenstiel had rendered immense services to his adversaries. They needed an honorable and level headed man to "confirm," even though very sparingly, Gerstein's exaggerated account. And Pfannenstiel was that man!

Gerstein, Wirth, Globocnik and Günther all died in 1944 or 1945. But Pfannenstiel, the last witness, survived for a long time. He was even able to regain a worthy place in his society. The Federal Republic loaded him with titles and honors which were probably merited but nevertheless suprising for a personage who had been a senior official of the SS and whom the Allies listed as the fifth man on a list of Nazi "war criminals."

Was Pfannenstiel's success in the Federal Republic the recompense he was paid in gratitude for his "docility"? We believe so.

Transformed into a permanent witness to the gas-chambers, perhaps Pfannenstiel grew weary of the role he was asked to play; so much is indicated in a letter he wrote to the French historian Paul Rassinier on August 3, 1963. In his letter he deplores that the mention of his name should have "on many occasions caused completely unjustified interpretations which are not only false but which have also caused me many injuries." And he adds: "I insist at all costs in avoiding any recurrence of a public debate concerning me personally, which could give rise to new negative interpretations and aspersions on the part of scandal-mongers."

His desire for tranquility can be excused: in 1963, he was 73 years of age.

Recently, we wrote to Frau Pfannenstiel to ask her what should truly be believed of the repetitious evidence submitted by her husband and which seemed partly to authenticate the affirmations by Gerstein. Her reply was brief: she wished to be left in peace in regard to this story which had troubled the lives of her husband and herself for so many years....

Such an attitude is perfectly understandable, but is such as to discourage the historian who seeks, if not the unattainable truth, then at least a plausible explanation.

Footnote

A true (or false) witness of the gas-chambers who met Paul Rassinier in 1963.

As a foot-note to a study of the Pfannenstiel case, it seems appropriate to recall a strange story of 1963, which Paul Rassinier recounts in his book *The Drama of European Jews*.

It has to be remembered that Rassinier did not believe in the existence of massive extermination in the gas-chambers, methodically organized by leaders of the Third Reich. But he admitted to the possibility of individual initiatives taken, at one place or another, by a few madmen. Thus he sought, throughout the whole of Europe, a single proof or a single witness to such gassings. In vain. And this honest historian, himself a former deportee at Dora and Buchenwald, concluded by totally denying any homicidal gassings whatsoever.

In June 1963, however, he received at his home at Asnières, near Paris, a strange visit. A man arrived: he said he was a patriotic German, an admirer of Rassinier's books; but he had decided to put the French historian on his guard against the temptation to deny all and every extermination by gas. "I was at Belzec with Gerstein; I was behind him when he entered Globocnik's office," declared the mysterious visitor, who made Rassinier promise not to reveal his identity.

Rassinier listened to this German, who gave him a version of the Gerstein story very similar to that of Pfannenstiel. Moreover, it was manifest that the visitor was trying to identify himself with Pfannenstiel. "He seemed to be about sixty years of age," Rassinier told us, "but I learned during the conversation that he was very much older." (Pfannenstiel, at that time, it should be noted, was actually seventy-three); he had had a high rank in the SS by virtue of his position in an important public service requisitioned during the war (as occupant of the chair of Hygiene at the University of Marburg, Pfannenstiel had been inducted into the SS and attained the rank of Obersturm-

bannführer, *i.e.*, Lieutenant Colonel.) In 1945, he had escaped being tried before the Nürnberg Tribunal and at that time had five small children who needed their father to look after them and attend to their education...all of which were exactly the circumstances of Professor Pfannenstiel.

Was this unexpected visitor Pfannenstiel? In France, Georges Wellers and Pierre Vidal-Naquet have affirmed that he was; and we ourselves believed it to be so for some time; until the day our researches led us to discover two letters from Pfannenstiel to Rassinier, one dated August 3, 1963 and the other September 18, 1963, translations of which appear below.

We have mentioned earlier the letter of August 3, an astonishing letter, from which we have already quoted an extract, but in which one can also read the following lines:

..I shall be very happy to meet you personally. (Emphasis added.) At that time, I shall willingly describe to you the impression made upon me by Kurt Gerstein.

Your suppositions in regard to the origin of his report, which really is a highly incredible fabrication in which the story is completely beyond belief, as well as the circumstances of his death, all seem — equally, in my opinion — to be suppositions well justified.

Accordingly, it is proved that Pfannenstiel did not call at Rassinier's house in June 1963, since Pfannenstiel states on August 3 of that same year that he will be pleased to meet Rassinier personally.

Furthermore, Pfannenstiel confirms ("as to essentials," we are tempted to say) Rassinier's suppositions on the subject of Gerstein and Gerstein's fanciful story.

Now, what was the French historian's thinking in regard to this subject at that time? For Rassinier, the Gerstein "report" was either a fiction, or the work of a lunatic, which every person possessing the minimum of common sense must reject totally. As to the SS officer's death, Rassinier believed it suspect and certainly had difficulty in believing it was suicide.

In his letter, Pfannenstiel seems to have spoken from the heart; he has travelled a long way from the obligatory witness he perforce had to be during the numerous interrogations to which he was submitted during the years from 1947 to 1970.

The second Pfannenstiel letter to Rassinier bears the date of September 18, 1963 and is handwritten. It contains information of a practical nature to enable Rassinier to go and visit him at Marburg before September 27.

What did these two men say to each other? We do not know. We can, however, believe that Pfannenstiel would hardly have been able to say anything different from that which had facilitated his release

on July 12, 1950 and which had enabled him to preserve a relative tranquility since that date, on the imperative condition that he not alter his statements. As for Rassinier, who had instigated this meeting, he was able to confirm that his visitor in June had not been the same person as his interlocutor of September of 1963.

So who, then, was the unknown visitor who had presented himself to Paul Rassinier in the troubled guise of the professor from Marburg? By whom, and for what reason, was he sent? We shall probably never know.

We should make clear that Rassinier had not made any detailed research of the Gerstein affair. He did not then have available, as we do, the texts of the six versions of Gerstein's story, nor did he have anything more than the reports of Pfannenstiel's successive interrogations.

For Rassinier, it was therefore not clear that his mysterious visitor was trying to identify himself as the professor from Marburg. It was merely Rassinier's intuition which guided him.

Pfannenstiel only agreed to receive Rassinier at his home in September 1963 on condition that the meeting would not be mentioned by the historian in any of his works.

The honorable Rassinier promised and, naturally, he kept his promise.

Translation of letter from Professor Wilhelm Pfannenstiel to M. Paul Rassinier dated August 3, 1963.

Dear Monsieur Rassinier,

I acknowledge with thanks the receipt of your letter of July 29, 1963.

As our mutual friend Grabert has already informed you, I shall be very happy to meet you personally. At that time, I shall willingly describe to you the impression made on me by Kurt Gerstein.

Your suppositions in regard to the origin of his report, which really is a highly incredible fabrication in which the story is completely beyond belief, as well as the circumstances of his death, all seem — equally, in my opinion — to be suppositions well justified.

In light of the fact that the involvement of my name in this trumpery has on many occasions aroused completely unjustified interpretations which are not only false but which have also caused me many injuries, you will understand that I insist at all costs in avoiding any recurrence of a public debate concerning me personally which could give rise to new negative interpretations and aspersions on the part of scandalmongers.

For these reasons, I shall be especially grateful to you for your guarantee to treat my evidence with the maximum of discretion.

It is true that I still continue to be often away on travel. Unfortunately, there is no particular occasion in the near future for me to travel to Paris or nearby to that magnificent city, which I visited for the first time in November of last year.

If you should have an opportunity to come to Marburg, a visit from you would be most welcome. From mid-August to the end of September I shall be at home most of the time.

Kindly write to me what approximate time I might be able to expect you here. We could then finalize an exact date for a meeting.

Sincere regards...

(signed) Wilhelm Pfannenstiel

Translation of letter from Professor Wilhelm Pfannenstiel to M. Paul Rassinier dated September 18, 1963.

Dear Monsieur Rassinier,

I am replying by return mail to your kind letter of September 18,³ to inform you that I shall be in Marburg from today until 27 September.

If therefore you wish to meet me on a weekday during this period, you are welcome.

Your train leaves Frankfurt at 15:31 and arrives at Marburg at 16:52. I shall await you at the central gate on whichever day you say is most convenient for you.

Should I reserve a room for the night or will you be returning the same evening?

I look forward with pleasure to making your acquaintance.

Sincere regards...

(signed) Wilhelm Pfannenstiel

Footnotes to Postscript I

1. Henri Roques' examination of the "confessions" of Kurt Gerstein, the most important "eyewitness" to alleged homicidal gassings during the Third Reich, will be available from IHR in English this summer.
2. From page 10
3. Evidently, a slight error of date.

Postscript II

Von Otter, or the Prudence of a Diplomat

HENRI ROQUES

After his brief visits to Belzec and Treblinka, on the evening of 20 August 1942, Gerstein took the train from Warsaw to Berlin. It was then that he engaged in conversation with a stranger who, as the train inspector had probably told him, was a Swedish diplomat, the Baron Göran von Otter, secretary of the Swedish Legation in Berlin.

With extreme nervousness, as von Otter later said, Gerstein immediately told him his confidential affairs. In a loud voice, and without taking the slightest precaution, he recounts what he says he has seen at the Belzec camp: the extermination *en masse* of men, women, and children. He weeps; he hides his face in his hands; he is at the apex of a nervous crisis which seems to disquiet rather than to convince von Otter.

Is Gerstein aware of this mistrust? Is he not frightened of not being taken seriously, or, worse, being considered an *agent provocateur*? Repeatedly, he gives as a reference the name of Dr. Otto Dibelius, a friend of Pastor Martin Niemöller, who is the head of the Protestant opposition to Nazism. It would be sufficient proof for the baron, Gerstein tells him, to go to the address he had indicated and then Dr. Dibelius, whom he knows well, will give the baron the most favorable references regarding Gerstein...

But before everything else, von Otter should alert his government straightaway and denounce the incredible crimes being committed in the concentration camps against the enemies of Germany. To put an end to these horrors, an international scandal must be provoked.

Gerstein insists and he pleads, and all this lasts several hours of a summer's night in a train corridor, since he had, like von Otter, been unable to find an available sleeping-berth.

Is von Otter surprised? He does not seem to be, for on 21 December 1966, that is to say more than twenty-one years after the end of the war, the diplomat, who was then stationed in London, stated to Pierre Joffroy, the author of a hagiography mentioned earlier: "I was at that time very prudent. I was careful of agitators... The revelations (of Gerstein) were on the whole the same as the rumors that I had heard about the massacres." *L'Espion de Dieu* (God's Spy, p. 17.)

Von Otter's evidence, as quoted by Pierre Joffroy, is very imprecise. While reading it, one acquires the impression that von Otter retained only a vague memory of his long conversation with Gerstein. At no point does von Otter mention the name of Belzec. Did he forget it? He said that an SS officer had told him of "a dreadful thing: how the convoy arrived; how they lined up in a queue in front of the gas-chamber" (*op. cit.* p. 16). Were these people not simply lining up in front of a disinfection chamber for the clothing they had taken off? Von Otter continued: "He probably also spoke of the gas he had delivered, of the sabotage he had made." One has to remark the adverb "probably."

The Gerstein story does not seem to have been recalled by the Swedish diplomat between 1942 and 1966...

Von Otter even adds that in the autumn of 1942 he met by chance, at the Swedish church in Berlin, Dr. Otto Dibelius, the dignitary given as reference by Gerstein. The Swedish diplomat tells us he did not think it worthwhile to inform Dibelius of his unusual meeting of the previous August in the Warsaw-Berlin express; he stated later to Pierre Joffroy, in order to justify his "discretion," that he had already been convinced by Gerstein's story...

"War rumors" of the most absurd and least verifiable kind abounded in all the countries of Europe at this time of folly. The Anglo-American propaganda forces, among others, did not hesitate to tell any lie to discredit the enemy; and they frequently gave proof of their imagination and expertise.

In this line, they demonstrated their efficiency notably by distributing in Germany a letter which was alleged to have been sent to a Catholic priest in Stettin by Colonel Werner Mölders, a German fighter-pilot hero, some days before his accidental death on 22 November 1941. In this alleged letter, Mölders, with a pretended moderation which makes the letter's contents even more persuasive and realistic, shows himself as a propagator of defeatism and a defender of Christian ideals against Hitlerian paganism. This letter was a masterpiece of composition and had great repercussions throughout Germany in 1942. Protests and official denials achieved nothing: everyone believed in the genuineness of the letter attributed to Mölders until the day, long after the war, when Sefton Delmer revealed that he was the author. Who, then, was Sefton Delmer? He was a British journalist of Australian origin and the director of the "Section for Psychological Warfare in Germany." He knew the German language perfectly, having learned it in Berlin, where he had lived for many years.

The atrocities campaign had also played its part in psychological warfare: the enemy, in the eyes of public opinion, must appear as a

monster. Already, in the war of 1914-1918, the fable of the Belgian children with their hands cut off by the Teutonic barbarians had had its hour of glory and provoked storms of indignation! From 1939 on, the Allies recommenced their practices of the previous war.

Unquestionably, von Otter was aware of all this, and this explains the skepticism with which he treated the “revelations” of Gerstein. However, as a conscientious diplomat, and perhaps impressed that his “confidant” was an SS officer, he informed his superiors. But the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs did not consider it appropriate to take any action.

Was von Otter’s report written or oral? This important point has only been settled very recently. Over the years, it has been possible to read in books and in the press that von Otter sent a report to the ministry in Stockholm. Friedländer and Joffroy, among others, were positive on this point in their writings. More recently, Walter Laqueur acknowledged that he had not found any written report in the archives in Stockholm.

It was only in March 1983 that the question was clearly put to von Otter, during a TV programme by the French historian Alain Decaux. Let us quote the text of the interview, as it can be read in Alain Decaux’s book *L’Histoire en Question – 2* (The History in Question – 2) “AD: Did you inform your government (of Gerstein’s revelations)? Did you do so verbally or in writing?

VO: Well, I returned to my legation in Berlin and, before everything else, I had begun to make a report the next day because I was naturally quite upset by my experience. I made my report to the Ambassador in fair detail, and asked him whether I should make a written report. He then told me that I did not need to make a written report, but that I should report these events during a visit to Stockholm, which I made some weeks later.

AD: And the Swedish government has not kept any record of your oral report at that time?

VO: No, no.

AD: Did you afterwards make a written report?

VO: No, no.

AD: Never?

VO: No. According to my recollection, I never made a report or even a memorandum on this episode. And I have often asked myself why. And I believe it was because I had had knowledge at that time that the same things had been reported by our consul at Stettin and, by a strange coincidence, his written report arrived at our embassy in Berlin the same day I met Gerstein. The report of the consul at Stettin is in the archives at Stockholm.”

We have photocopies of the relevant Stockholm archives in which

the report of the consul in Stettin is included. The complete report is rather long and contains only a short paragraph on information received according to which 40,000 Jews were gassed in the course of a delousing in the region of Lublin. No other details are given. Manifestly, the consul in Stettin restricted himself to reporting a persistent but unverifiable rumor. The Swedish archives prove that Baron von Otter, probably little convinced himself, did not succeed in convincing his superiors of the exceptional importance of the information furnished by the Obersturmbannführer. Perhaps it was thought in Stockholm that Gerstein had been manipulated and, according to the well-tried ruse, was "spreading false information in order to discover who was honest."

But these same Swedish archives prove that von Otter after the war would not have spoken of his conversations with Gerstein if he had not been insistently requested to do so by one of his colleagues stationed in London in 1945.

This colleague, Baron Lagerfelt, who was also von Otter's personal friend, had been informed by the War Crimes Commission attached to the United Nations that there existed a Gerstein report in which von Otter was cited as a principal witness.

Von Otter, at the time stationed in Helsinki, was pressed by his friend to confirm urgently the essentials of what Gerstein had written in his report. Von Otter did so during the last days of July 1945. In these circumstances, Lagerfelt was able to compose an *aide-mémoire* dated 7 August 1945.¹ This document confirms Gerstein's conversations with "a foreign diplomat of a neutral country" stationed in Berlin. It is not without interest to note that in his *aide-mémoire* the name of the Swedish diplomat does not appear and neither does the name of the neutral country. "Diplomatic prudence" is not an expression devoid of meaning!

In effect, von Otter seems above all to have been disturbed by Gerstein's extravagant behavior in the corridor of the train from Warsaw to Berlin. We know from the confidences made by von Otter to those who questioned him after 1945 that the diplomat did not seek to encounter the SS officer again although he had his Berlin address. It was Gerstein who went prowling around the neighborhood of the Swedish legation in Berlin in the hope of meeting von Otter again. One day, he did find him, in a street near the legation. Von Otter has described how his interlocutor was in an agitated state bordering on nervous collapse. "He was hardly in a condition to formulate a sentence," von Otter said.

Gerstein wanted to know whether the Swedish government had been informed and what von Otter thought might happen as a result of these revelations. With a few calming words, von Otter got rid of

him and the strange Obersturmbannführer disappeared, without offering anything new.

In this regard a contradiction, perhaps a minor but nevertheless significant, appears between Gerstein's statements and those of von Otter. In the versions II, III, V, and VI of his "confessions" Gerstein alleges that he saw the Swedish diplomat again *twice*. Von Otter recalls having met Gerstein only *once* (according to his statement of 29 May 1981 before the Paris tribunal). Was the third interview merely imagined by Gerstein to reinforce the dramatic intensity of his story?

Should we consider von Otter as a principal witness attesting the truthfulness of Gerstein's story? One would have us believe so, but the reality seems quite different.

In 1942, the young Swedish diplomat stationed at Berlin was accustomed to hearing all sorts of war rumors: von Otter was therefore incredulous and little inclined to re-encounter this singular officer whose behavior disquieted

During the months which followed the German capitulation, the Allied propaganda machine went full blast and had for almost its only theme the atrocities, true or imagined, in the Nazi concentration camps. Von Otter was requested to contribute to this campaign by confirming the truth of the Gerstein story. The Swede complied with a good grace while at the same time bearing some sort of witness to the "good SS" he had known who could, at that time, find themselves in a difficult position.

In effect, we can read in the *aide-mémoire* of 7 August 1945: "His sorrow and indignation at the actions perpetrated in the extermination camps seemed to be as genuine as they were profound; and his wish to share his knowledge with the outside world in such a way as to enable them to be halted appeared sufficiently sincere." One notices the use of the limiting "seemed" and "appeared" to describe Gerstein's attitude. Diplomatic language is full of nuances...

After the rehabilitation of the Obersturmbannführer in 1965, von Otter was pursued at his various diplomatic postings by the biographers of Gerstein, and then by the journalists; ultimately, his evidence was requested by various tribunals.

It is not impossible that the Swedish diplomat may have been gradually seized by remorse. He had met "God's Spy" and had not recognised him. Perhaps now, confusedly, he felt himself guilty? As all those who doubt that Gerstein told the truth should similarly feel guilty?

Footnote To Postscript II

1. The Lagerfelt correspondence:

Translation of aide-mémoire signed by Lagerfelt and dated from London, 7 August 1945.

"Aide-mémoire concerning Kurt Gerstein, civil engineer, member of the SS-Sanitätsabteilung, Giesebrechtstrasse, born probably at Braunschweig in 1907(?) and residing in 1943 at Bülowstrasse 49, in Berlin.

In August 1942, Gerstein made contact with a member of a neutral legation in Berlin and recounted to him as follows. He was returning from a short mission to the extermination camp of Belsec (sic), near Lublin. He recounted in detail what was happening (the gas-chambers, the reaction of the personnel, the recovery of gold teeth, etc.) He also showed documents, identity cards and orders to deliver hydrocyanic acid signed by the commandant of the camp. Gerstein said that his concern was to bring these events to the knowledge of the neutral observers. He was firmly convinced that if the facts were confirmed by impartial foreigners, the German people would not for one moment continue any longer its support for the Nazi regime. He said moreover that he had discussed the problem with a high German ecclesiastical dignitary belonging to the opposition, Superintendent Dibelius (which was later confirmed by Dibelius himself and who held himself guarantor for Gerstein's veracity.)

Later, clarifications were given on the motives for Gerstein's actions. Gerstein, who had never participated in political activities of any sort and who was not a Nazi, volunteered for the SS to obtain an assignment in the Sanitätsabteilung — the special branch which organised the concentration camps - because he was anxious to have confirmation of his suspicions on the subject of the abnormal death rate in the German psychiatric asylums during the years 1941-1942. It was at that period that a close relative of Gerstein's, whom he loved very much, herself died in such an asylum. What he later learned in the extermination camps convinced him that his suspicions were only too well-founded.

Six months later, Gerstein made a visit to the same neutral diplomat in order to ask him whether it had been possible to do anything. This was the last time there was any news of him.

His sorrow and indignation about the actions perpetrated in the extermination camps seemed to be as genuine as they were profound; and his wish to share his knowledge with the outside world in such a way as to enable them to be halted appeared sufficiently sincere. [signed] Lagerfelt."

Translation of letter from Lagerfelt to his friend and colleague von Otter dated 14 August 1945.

"Colleague Strictly Confidential

In pursuance of your letter of 23 July concerning the SS Gerstein, I permit myself to inform you that after reflection I have forwarded to my opposite number at the Foreign Office an *aide-mémoire* on the subject (in which, however, your name is not mentioned), requesting that this document be forwarded as soon as possible to the Reconstruction Department of the Foreign Office* which has the responsibility, among other matters, for war crimes. I hope that in this way the demands of justice will be met. [signed] Lagerfelt

To Monsieur the First Secretary of Legation, Baron G. von Otter, Helsinki."

* The Reconstruction Department of the Foreign Office was a temporary post-war organization concerned with political and military reconstruction such as the peace

treaties, the United Nations Organisation and so forth. Its responsibilities had no connection with war crimes: and this would have been known to Lagerfelt from the Foreign Office list, a directory showing all FO departments and their responsibilities, and which was circulated to all diplomatic missions.

Furthermore, neither the Swedish Embassy in London nor the British Foreign Office in London had any diplomatic status regarding alleged war crimes that did not concern British or Commonwealth subjects and that had supposedly happened in Poland.

If Lagerfelt had been serious, why did he not inform the Polish authorities; or send his *aide-mémoire* to the War Crimes Commission, which had raised the subject with him in the first place?

It seems apparent that Lagerfelt, as a trained diplomat, was less concerned to have “the demands of justice met” than to have the *aide-mémoire* quietly lost among the enormous bureaucracy that existed in immediate postwar London.

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